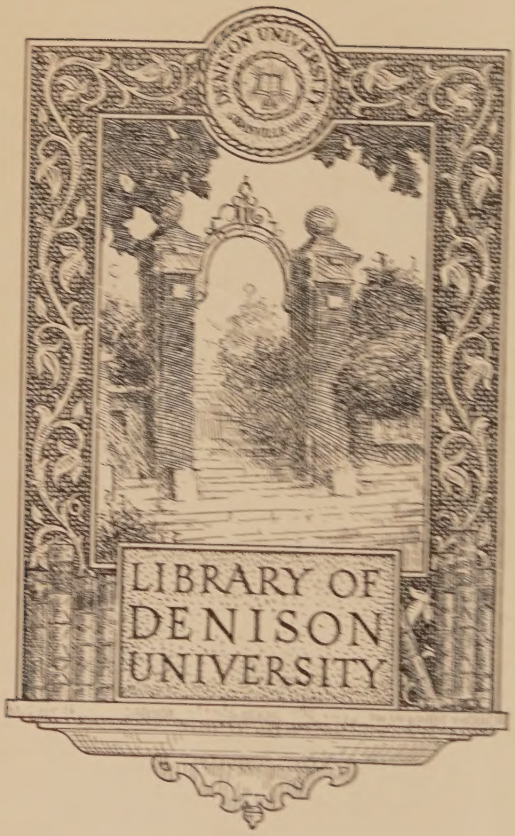
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WITHDRAWN

The Two Battles of the Marne

The Two Battles of the Marne

The Stories of

MARSHAL JOFFRE
GENERAL VON LUDENDORFF
MARSHAL FOCH
CROWN PRINCE WILHELM

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MARSHAL JOFFRE'S

Narrative of the Battle of the Marne, as told to Bernard Désouches, official liaison officer between the French Army and the American Air Service in France.

Revised by Major Desmazes, chief of the marshal's personal staff.

I

ON September 5, 1914, as commander-in-chief of the French forces facing the invading German hosts along the river Marne, I issued this order to the gallant troops whose valor was to decide the future of France:

"As we are about to begin the battle upon which depends the fate of our country, it is necessary to remind all that the time for retreat has ended. Every effort must be made to drive back the enemy. A soldier who can no longer advance must guard the territory already held, no matter what the cost. He must be killed in his tracks rather than draw back."

How gallantly our troops responded to the call of *la patrie* all the world knows. Paris, the heart of France, was saved. The Germans were driven back to a line where they dug themselves in. Their dreams of quick conquest were over.

The general staff's plan of campaign was based upon the certainty that the German Empire would have to wage war simultaneously on its eastern and western frontiers. It was advisable, therefore, for the Germans first to concentrate the maximum of

power against France, the most dangerous of their adversaries. When France was crushed, they could then turn around and defeat the Russians, who were much slower in mobilizing and getting into action than the French on account of Russia's lack of railroads.

The success of this plan depended upon the rapidity and strength of the attack to enable the Germans to dispose of the French. The armies of France had to be defeated before the tsar's armies could be in a position to throw the weight of their millions of soldiers into the military balance.

Now the Franco-German frontier fairly bristled with fortresses. The German army, although more liberally equipped with the materials of war than any other nation, could not hope to crash through this fortified barrier, against which the French field forces would set their backs.

Thus, to the German staff, the idea of bringing about an operation in open country presented itself. Such an operation, they believed, would enable them to achieve in the smallest possible time a decisive victory over France.

A glance at the map of western Europe showed that the only open door to France was through Belgium!

The invasion and violation of Belgium presented many diplomatic complications. But from the military point of view alone, it was logical. And it almost succeeded.

On August 20, 1914, twenty days after the war began, the three armies forming the right wing of the German forces poured out of conquered Namur, at the northern frontier of France, and met the French left and the small British army that had been transported across the Channel from its home base. The torrent of German troops that poured through Belgium could not at first be resisted. The French left wing and the entire British forces were compelled to retreat in order to avoid a catastrophe.

The situation could be saved for the Allies only by a daring and difficult change in our plans. It was on the night of August 25 that I made my decision. The First and Second French armies would remain in Lorraine with orders to oppose the German left, while the armies of our center and left (including the British army), which were bravely and stubbornly opposing the advancing center and right of the Germans, would fall back, pivoting on Verdun, to a line running westward from that city to Laon, La Fère and the high valley of the Somme.

To the east of Verdun lay the Vosges Mountains,

with their great forts. Here the First and Second French armies and the Sixth and Seventh German armies opposed each other. None of these armies participated in the battle of the Marne or in the actions leading directly up to it.

To the west of Verdun the French center, made up of the Third Army, under General Sarrail; the Fourth Army under General Langle, and the newly created Ninth Army, under General Foch, faced the Fifth German Army, under the German Crown Prince; the Fourth Army, under the Prince of Würtemberg, and the Third Army, under General von Hausen.

Still farther to the west the French left, consisting of the Fifth Army under General Lanrezac, and the British army under Field Marshal Sir John French, was opposed to the Second and First German armies under Generals von Bülow and von Kluck, respectively.

My plan of August 25, besides calling for a retreat to the lines of Verdun-La Fère, also called for the organization of an entirely new French army to the left and rear of the British army. This was named the Sixth Army, which was put under command of General Maunoury. It began assembling on August 27. It was made up of troops taken from our right in Lorraine, and its task was to prevent the outflank-

ing of our forces by itself outflanking the enemy. Eventually, it would cover Paris.

The days immediately following the 25th saw numerous minor French successes. General Langle's Fourth Army on August 27 won a very distinct success on the Meuse River over the army of the Prince of Würtemberg. The French Fifth Army compelled the German right to stop its pursuit by a fierce counter-offensive at Guise on the 29th, and on the 25th, itself, the French First and Second armies had gained an important defensive victory in Lorraine.

But, in spite of these heartening developments, the arrangement of our forces, instead of being rewelded, continued to become more and more disassociated. The new army of General Maunoury had hardly started unloading in the region of the Somme when the advance guard of Von Kluck's army made its appearance there. The French left was compelled to swerve towards Paris. The conditions essential to taking the offensive had not been realized. A new retreat was imposed upon us. The line running westward from Verdun to Laon, La Fère, and the high valley of the Somme had to be abandoned.

Thus, on September 1, I ordered the armies to continue retreating as far as a line resting on the river Seine, still using Verdun as a pivot. The Fifth

Army would fall back to Nogent, which is southeast of Paris; Foch's Ninth Army would stop to the south of Arcis on the river Aube, which is a tributary of the Seine, beginning east of Nogent; Langle's Fourth Army was to rest to the east of Vitry, on the river Ornain, a tributary of the Marne, beginning northeast of Arcis; and Sarrail's Third Army must halt at Bar-le-Duc, also on the Ornain, and northeast of Vitry.

This line, which formed a semicircle running southwest from Verdun to the outskirts of Paris, was in my orders to all our armies "considered as the limit of the retreat, without implying that this limit would necessarily be attained." It was not attained. On September 5 the Allied armies halted, and midway between the Seine and the Marne they began the attack which in the next five days saved France, defeated the entire German plan of campaign and changed the military situation from an open battle to a war of attrition.

The period of retreat was used to restore order among the troops; to fill vacancies with fresh men; to take large bodies of soldiers from the armies of the right and transfer them to those of the left, which were to play the decisive part in the coming battle, and to strengthen the gaps between the armies with corps of cavalry organized especially for this purpose.

But, no matter how well this time of retreat was employed, the decision to fall back was full of dangers.

First of all, we were abandoning to the enemy another section of our territory. By an unhappy fatality the north and east of France contained her richest provinces. And we knew from what had just taken place in Belgium that the Germans would respect neither property nor people in the surrendered area. This plan was to make war terrible, unbearable to the civil population in the hope of making the war short and decisive. Furthermore, Paris, the capital and heart of France, would soon be in the zone of operations.

To these risks, there was added another—a moral one. It is well known that France possesses incomparable military traditions. And it is generally recognized that the artisan of her victories for centuries—the French soldier—is second to none in intelligence, courage and energy. But it has been frequently said that the French soldier lacked patience, and that he was scarcely likely to endure without flinching the depressing, weakening, seemingly hopeless long retreat. It was, therefore, to be feared that the French army, shaken by the failures encountered at the beginning, might break before reaching the Seine.

That was, of course, the enemy's scheme and purpose. But I, who know the French soldier as a father knows his cherished son, had absolute faith in him, and went ahead methodically, getting ready for the decisive engagement. In the meantime, General von Moltke, supreme commander of the German forces, was unconsciously preparing his own defeat.

The Germans to date had achieved repeated victories on the western front, but in eastern Prussia they had received such a severe check that the commander of their armies in that area had decided immediately to evacuate all German territory east of the Vistula River. The first Russian troops in action had been mobilized more rapidly than expected by the Germans.

Von Moltke was tremendously upset at the prospect of abandoning to the Cossacks the cradle of the Prussian monarchy. He felt it necessary to avoid such a catastrophe on account of the effect it would have upon the Germans at home.

On August 25 he, therefore, withdrew two army corps from the western front and dispatched them to eastern Prussia. One of these corps came from Von Bülow's Second Army and the other from Von Hausen's Third Army. Now, two German army corps were already occupied in the north with the Belgian

army, and one army corps and a half were besieging Maubeuge.

Thus, at the time I was reinforcing my left by building up a whole new army there under General Maunoury, the German command was recklessly withdrawing troops from its right. It was this right upon which the brunt of the coming fighting was to fall, and which Maunoury was to endeavor to outflank.

On August 26, the day after the transfer of the two German army corps from the western front, the British suffered a serious check at Le Gateau. This seemed to give Von Moltke absolute assurance of victory, for on the 27th he issued general instructions, organizing the German armies for their triumphal march on Paris.

The Second Army of Von Bülow was ordered to march directly on the capital city, having on its right flank Von Kluck's First Army, which was to move in the direction of the Seine to the west of the metropolis. Von Hausen's Third Army had Château-Thierry as its objective. The Prince of Würtemberg's Fourth Army would occupy Rheims and Epernay. And the Fifth Army of the imperial crown prince was to march on Châlons-sur-Marne and Vitry-le-François.

The principal mass of the German armies was, therefore, hurled upon Paris. But in one of the last

paragraphs of the order of the German commander-in-chief there was this reservation: "Strong resistance encountered on the Aisne and subsequently on the Marne may render necessary the turning of the armies from the southwest to the south."

These directions came from Luxemburg, where the imperial staff was installed. They reached the army commanders on August 28. From this moment General von Moltke was deprived of the conduct of operations. The change of events and the individual initiative of his commanders were to face the German supreme chief with a series of accomplished facts.

The Duke of Würtemberg, having been very roughly handled on the Meuse by Langle's Fourth French Army during the day and night of August 27, had to call for aid upon his right-hand neighbor, General von Hausen. In response to the duke's appeal, Von Hausen deflected the course of the Third Army to the south, and threw his forces against the troops of General Foch.

A similar development occurred on the Germans' extreme right. Von Kluck with his First Army had passed the Somme, when, on the evening of the 31st, he received a wireless message from Von Bülow, requesting him to hurl himself on the left of the French Fifth Army, which had just fought the fierce battle

of Guise. Von Kluck at once responded to this appeal by directing the march of his army southward towards Noyon and Compiègne.

Von Moltke quickly resigned himself to this change of direction, which he had not ordered, but which he had nevertheless provided for in his general instructions of the 27th. In fact, he told the army commanders in succeeding instructions that the new direction complied with his intentions, and on the night of the 2d of September he sent out the now celebrated wireless message:

"The intention of the supreme command is to cut off the French from Paris to the southeast. The First Army (Von Kluck's) will follow the Second in echelons, and will insure the protection of the flank of all the armies."

Thus the German armies suddenly stopped spreading out, as if preparing to mow down the Allied armies and take Paris with one tremendous encircling sweep of a gigantic scythe. Instead, they now began penetrating into the encircling curve which was beginning to be assumed by the Allied battle front from the outskirts of Verdun to the approaches of Paris.

It is true that Von Moltke had prudently ordered Von Kluck's First Army to insure, during the course of this new march, the protection of the outside flank

of the German forces. But Von Kluck had already recklessly moved on to the southeast. On September 1 he had crossed the Oise, again coming in contact with the British to the south of Compiègne. The British had immediately fallen back and Von Kluck, no longer troubling himself about this adversary, whom he wrongly considered as out of the show, went forward with still greater speed.

He was intent on engaging the left of Lanrezac's Fifth Army and thus completing the maneuver which Von Bülow had indicated to him on August 31.

Pushing toward the Marne, between Château-Thierry and Dormans, in which direction Von Kluck's aviation informed him Lanrezac's army was fast retreating, the German First Army made rapid progress, and on the evening of September 2 its left reached the Marne at Château-Thierry.

Von Bülow, during this time, had lingered in front of La Fère and, afterward, before Rheims. By the evening of the 2d, when Von Kluck's left rested on the Marne, the Second Army had hardly reached the Vesle. Von Bülow, thereupon, ordered a forced march for the 3d, which was to enable him to cross the Marne between Château-Thierry and Chatillon.

It can thus be seen that on the night of the 2d when Von Moltke sent out the famous wireless mes-

sage, which ordered the First Army to *follow* the Second in echelons so as to cover the flank of the German armies, Von Kluck was a day's march *ahead* of his neighbor.

But far from being alarmed at this daring initiative, which is to be attributed to unwarranted contempt of his adversary, Von Kluck added to his disobedience on the following day. He pressed on with the bulk of his troops toward Meaux and the lower Ourcq. Arriving here he then decided to continue his march toward the Seine, thinking to complete the destruction of Lanrezac's army, whose track Von Bülow was following.

The German armies were unguardedly rushing into the great trap which was being laid for them.

The eyes of the imperial staff were finally opened to the danger to which Von Kluck's mad pursuit was exposing the German armies. On September 4, at about 7 P.M., the following wireless message was dispatched from Luxemburg:

"The First and Second armies shall remain facing the front, east of Paris; the First between the Oise and the Marne, and the Second between the Marne and the Seine."

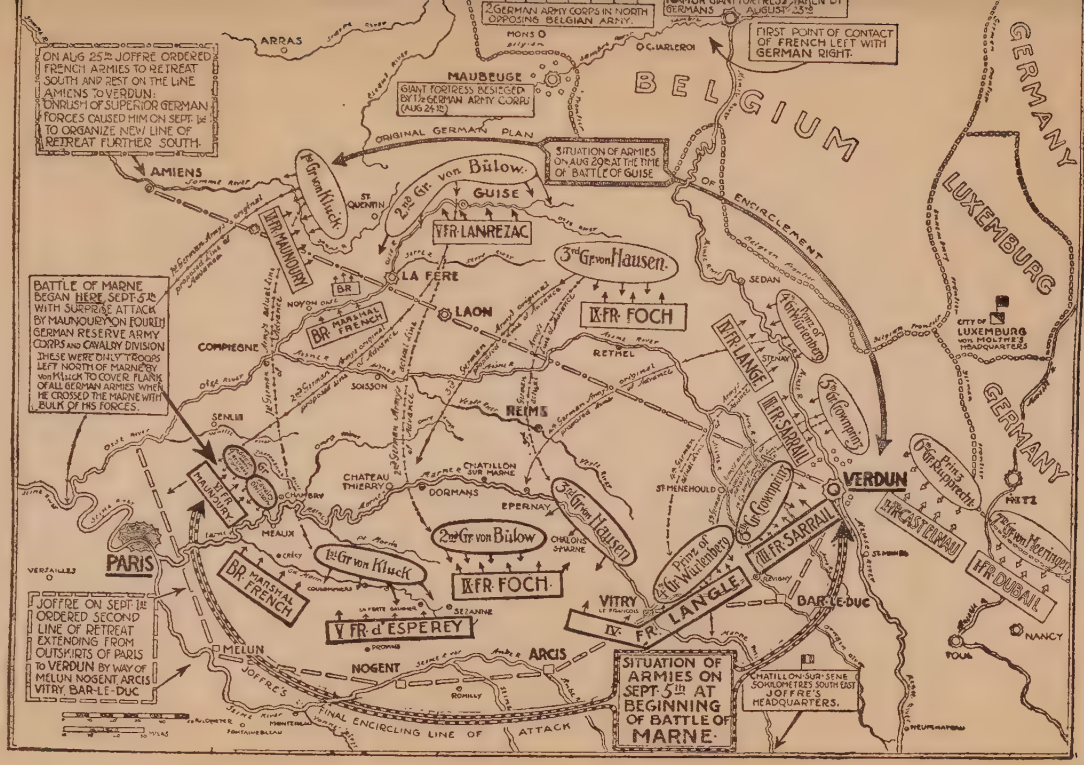
This order was presented to Von Kluck on the morning of the 5th. He read it with astonishment.

He was told to stop between the Oise and the Marne when he had almost reached the Seine; when he saw himself about to complete with victory the success prepared by Von Bülow on the Oise!

It was at this moment that Lieutenant-Colonel Hentsch reached the First Army headquarters, bringing orders from the imperial general staff. Hentsch informed Von Kluck that the enemy had escaped the encircling attack, and that in the region of Paris a menace existed in the large masses of troops which the French commander-in-chief was assembling there.

The German right, consisting of the First and Second armies, would therefore veer round to face this newly organized army of the enemy. The Fourth and Fifth German armies would continue to march toward the southeast, and the Third Army would advance toward the south, ready to support the First and Second armies on its right or the Fourth and Fifth on its left.

Von Kluck, now enlightened respecting this situation he so little expected, thought that he would have adequate time to make his return to the north of the Marne, where he had left only a single army corps supported by one cavalry division. But on the night of September 5, to his utter astonishment, a message arrived at his headquarters from Rebais



This map visualizing the strategic movements in the first phase of the Battle of the Marne was revised for publication by Major Desmazes, chief of Marshal Joffre's personal staff.

stating that his reserve corps north of the Marne had just been forced back by superior forces of the enemy.

The battle of the Marne had begun with the complete surprise of the German First Army.

The battle of the Marne was not only a giant conflict of great armies, but also a significant struggle between two methods of command.

The military method practiced on the French side had been inspired by the teachings of Napoleon. This doctrine calls upon the commander-in-chief to direct the battle from beginning to end. It is he who coordinates activities, guides every initiative, and endeavors to seize all possible advantages. There is no insistence upon mechanically following a preconceived plan which the enemy's counter-efforts usually render ineffective.

In the German camp, a quite different doctrine was being followed. It had been bequeathed to the armies of the empire by old Marshal von Moltke. The victor of the battles of Sadowa and Sedan taught that the actual direction of a battle falls principally upon the subordinate command. The commander-in-chief, after having drawn the general plan of battle, makes way for the initiative of his army commanders.

This method succeeded against Austria in 1866

and against France in 1870, because in these two campaigns, which founded the German Empire, the Prussian forces were confronted by inert armies led by feeble commanders.

In 1914, however, Von Moltke's doctrine resulted in failure. In the preliminary phases leading up to the battle of the Marne, the German supreme command had submitted to the ascendency of its army commanders, accepting their rashest actions. The German commander-in-chief had not endeavored to correct his subordinate's most flagrant mistakes, nor did he take notice of their spirited disregard of his orders.

It is a German general who said: "A battle is not only an act of force, but also a conflict of wills." It is, in addition, a conflict of intelligences.

We have already seen how between August 25 and September 5 the situations of the German and Allied armies were reversed. After destroying the Belgian frontier fortresses, Liége and Namur, and the French-intrenched camp of Maubeuge, the German armies had begun a grand encircling movement like the sweep of a gigantic scythe that was intended to encompass the French capital, Paris. But on the eve of the battle of the Marne they found themselves inside a curve described by the Allied armies. The

eastern extremity of this curve abutted on the fortress of Verdun, and the western end on the intrenched camp of Paris.

The Germans swung too far toward the center of the Allies' encircling line, and failed to cover their right flank. It was against this flank that I had massed General Maunoury's army. And it was here that the battle of the Marne really began.

Now the Germans owed the dangerous situation of their right to three primary causes.

First: The failure of the German intelligence service to reveal in time to General von Moltke the menace which was developing on his right in the form of the newly created Sixth French Army under General Maunoury.

Second: The serious mistake of the German supreme command in particularly weakening the armies of its right to strengthen a secondary and more remote theater of war. (Two army corps had been sent to the Russian front.)

Third: The repeated disobedience of Von Kluck had transformed the offensive arrangement prescribed by Von Moltke to take effect on September 2 into a defensive arrangement which could not meet the requirements of the situation in view of the force and ferocity of the French counter-attack.

Thus the position of the two weights of the military balance had been radically changed. The weight of the Allies had been increased at the vital point, while that of the Germans had been lightened. The equilibrium had been gradually displaced to our decided advantage.

Besides those favorable conditions already described, under which the Allies were about to begin the battle of the Marne, there was to be added another, the most essential—*surprise!*

The battle began on September 5 with a surprise attack upon Von Kluck's army, after the long retreat of the Allies. The German right flank was then unexpectedly attacked by Maunoury's troops. The forces of the Sixth French Army had been set energetically into action by General Galliéni, military governor of Paris. The story of their hasty transport to the front by every imaginable means of locomotion is a glorious chapter in the history of France. Here taxicabs played, for the first time in history, a heroic rôle by transporting an entire army to make a surprise attack.

If surprise played an essential part in the battles of the past, its importance has increased in modern warfare. This is easy to understand. The enormous mass of combatants in this battle—a million and a

half of men—and the immensity of the battle fronts, about 180 miles long, compelled the commander-in-chief to make his plans long before the actual battle. Naturally, this militated against the possibility of surprise. And it is difficult radically to change the plans of battle in the middle of an action. Once the cards are dealt, you must play the hand you hold.

However, this does not mean that when the battle has once begun the commander-in-chief has only to await the result, like one computing a set of figures. In this battle the figures were changed and shifted and the big figures concentrated at certain points during the battle itself. In fact, it is because the French command, inspired by the example of the great Napoleon, seized every advantage the course of battle offered that the victory was won by them instead of by the enemy.

The Allied armies had carried out as well as they could the movements leading up to the battle of the Marne. Their great retreat before the fully prepared avalanche of German troops had been skilfully executed. The Fifth Army of Lanrezac had released itself unharmed from Von Bülow's onslaught. The British, who were on Lanrezac's left and had retreated faster, fighting stubbornly every step of the way, had finally reached the Seine below Paris. And Mau-

noury's army, transferred, partly in taxicabs, round Paris to turn the flank of Von Kluck's German army, reached the northeast sector of Paris in the evening of September 2.

Here it was preparing to receive the enemy's attack when, to its great surprise, the columns of Von Kluck's army neglected the capital city and deviated to the left or southeast, instead of to the right or southwest, as the German general staff had intended.

It was on September 4, when the movement of the German right (General von Kluck) had become extremely accentuated toward the south, that I felt the supreme moment had come to *start the decisive battle*. My first care was to ascertain that our armies, which had suffered most during the retreat, were capable of resuming the offensive. That was essential. If one link breaks the whole chain gives way.

In reply to my inquiry General Franchet d'Espérey, who now commanded the Fifth Army, having replaced General Lanrezac, and General Foch, who commanded the Ninth Army, on General d'Espérey's right, both answered by telephone from fifty to seventy miles away that their troops could be relied upon. These armies had borne the brunt of the German offensive, were hard pressed and had suffered terrible losses.

Thus I knew that the French forces were ready for the supreme effort. Their spirit was not broken. I delayed no longer, and on September 4, at 10 P.M., signed the order calling for the attack to begin on the morning of the 6th:

GENERAL ORDER NO. 6.

1—It behooves us to profit from the adventurous situation of the First German Army and to concentrate against it the efforts of the Allied armies of the extreme left.

All preparations will be taken during the day of September 5, in view of beginning the attack on the 6th.

2—The arrangement to be realized on the evening of September 5 is as follows:

(a) All the forces making up the Sixth Army to the northeast of Meaux ready to cross the Ourcq, between Lisy-sur-Ourcq and Mayen-Multien, in the general direction of Château-Thierry.

The disposable parts of the cavalry corps which are in the proximity will be put under the orders of General Maunoury for this operation.

(b) The British army to be established along the front Changis-Coulommiers, facing east and ready to attack in the general direction of Montmirail.

(c) The Fifth Army, closing in slightly on its left, will establish itself along the front Courtacon-Esternay-Sézanne, and be ready to attack in the general direction south to north. The Second Cavalry Corps will assume the liaison between the British army and the Fifth Army.

(d) The Ninth Army will cover the right of the Fifth Army in holding the southern outlets of the marsh of Saint Gond, and in bringing a part of its forces to the plateau to the north of Sézanne.

3—The offensive will be taken by these different armies from the morning of September 6.

(Signed) JOFFRE.

At this time there was one uncertain quantity in the Allied camp—the British army. It had suffered greatly in the initial encounters, and during the retreat Marshal French, in obedience to the instructions received from the British government, had endeavored to give his forces time to reconstitute themselves even at the expense of not maintaining a uniform front with the French army. It had been necessary, following the ideas of the French government, for Lord Kitchener to intervene personally so that the British commander-in-chief would at all hazards keep his brave army in line.

It was only natural, therefore, for one to ask on the evening of the 4th if Marshal French, already sounded on this question by the governor of Paris, would consent to change from the defensive retreat to an attack with all his strength alongside the French armies.

The question was a serious one. The British regular army had suffered terrific losses in the six-day battle, in which it had slowly retreated sixty to eighty miles, but fighting every step of the way, and always with face to the advancing avalanche of the enemy. I had no authority over the British commander-in-chief except that which he was himself willing to recognize. If the British continued to fall back it meant that the fighting line of the Allies, which had been reconstituted with so much difficulty, would again be broken. And this time a fracture might be fatal to our entire battle front.

To banish all doubt, I personally called upon Marshal French on September 5 in the early afternoon. I found him at the Château de Vaux-de-Penil near Melun. I did not understand English and the British marshal did not speak French. General Wilson of the British staff acted as interpreter.

I showed the British commander-in-chief the position of my armies, which were about to begin the

battle upon which depended the outcome of the war. I explained that it would never be understood how the British army could be present without taking a great part in so decisive a struggle. I appealed to British honor, knowing that it is never appealed to in vain.

Marshal French listened to my words in silence. When Wilson translated my moving appeal to him, he replied simply: "I will do all I possibly can."

The battle began on the afternoon of September 5. At the western extremity of the immense line of battle, the Sixth French Army encountered the Fourth German Reserve Corps, which made up Von Kluck's extreme right. The two forces met between the Ourcq and the Marne, about four miles north of Meaux. The Germans were immediately thrown back beyond the Therouanne River, which is one of the northern tributaries of the Marne.

General von Kluck was now thoroughly aware of the danger facing the German armies as a result of his mad rush to reach the Seine. With a resolution that spoke highly of his confidence in his troops and of the technical skill of his staff, he decided upon a rapid change of front. He ordered his Second and Fourth Army corps, which were in a position to intervene in the shortest possible time, to proceed by

forced marches to the north of the Marne. His object was to lengthen the right of the Fourth Reserve Corps, and turn the flank of the French who had just overlapped his troops in the north.

General von Kluck believed he could execute this preliminary maneuver without calling upon the two army corps composing his left. These, on the morning of the 6th while facing southward, had come into cooperation with Von Bülow's right, which at this moment was engaged by the right of Franchet d'Espérey's Fifth Army and the left of Foch's Ninth Army.

At the same time, the German's Fourth and Fifth armies, under the command of the Prince of Würtemberg and the imperial crown prince, respectively, were attacked by Langle's Fourth French Army and Sarrail's Third French Army. As to the Third German Army of Von Hausen, it received two simultaneous calls for help. General von Bülow requested it to support his left, and the Prince of Würtemberg demanded assistance for his right.

Von Hausen had had since the beginning of the campaign the hard task, besides fighting and advancing on his own front, of responding to repeated calls for aid from the German armies on both his wings. He now divided his strongest forces, hurling one to the assistance of Von Bülow, east of the marshes of

Saint Gond, and with the other supported Würtemberg's right to the east of Vitry-le-François.

On September 7 the fighting became terrific on a battle front nearly two hundred miles in length. In the west (northeast of Paris) Von Kluck had found Maunoury a stronger adversary than he had expected. He therefore ordered the two army corps of his left north of the Marne in the direction of the river Ourcq. Their departure immediately uncovered the right of Von Bülow's Second Army.

Thus an enormous gap was created in the German right. While Von Bülow's Second Army was fighting south of the Marne with its front facing south, Von Kluck's First Army was fighting north of the Marne with its front facing west. The open space between these two armies was occupied only by the thin line of Von der Marwitz's corps of cavalry.

The British army and the left of D'Espérey's Fifth Army pushed back this fragile barrier on the night of September 6, advancing to the river Grand Morin, one of the southern tributaries of the Marne. On September 7 they crossed the river and threatened to outflank the Second German Army of Von Bülow on its right.

This menace to his flank forced Von Bülow to draw back his right wing in a defensive hook. An advan-

tage gained in the meantime by Von Kluck over Maunoury, whose left was compelled to draw back despite its reinforcement by an army corps which I had sent, did not fully compensate for the ever-increasing danger facing Von Bülow.

On September 8, the action entered its decisive phase.

To the west, Von Kluck had totally evacuated the territory south of the Marne, completely separating himself from Von Bülow. He was now fully engaged with his counter-attack against Maunoury.

The Germans paid dearly for the definite separation of their First and Second armies. In the area between these two armies there had begun the victorious advance of the British and the main body of D'Espérey's Fifth Army. On the 8th these allied forces reached the plateau between the river Petit Morin and the Marne. The Petit Morin is another of the tributaries of the Marne, situated north of the Grand Morin.

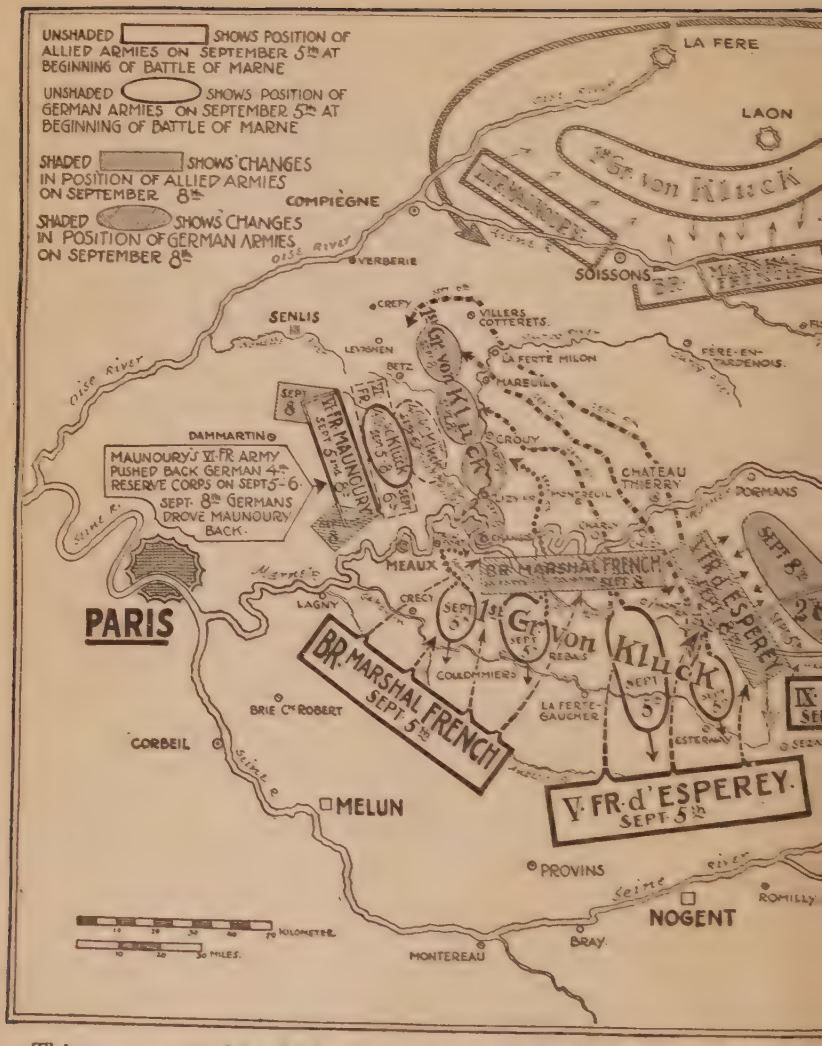
General von Bülow on the morning of the 8th gave up all hope of receiving any aid on his right from Von Kluck. The latter, heedless of the general issue, was conducting an isolated action, fighting desperately north of the Marne and slowly retreating toward the northeast.

The commander of the Second German Army, Von Bülow, endeavored to right the situation with a daring action. He hurled his center and left, which was supported by the right wing of Von Hausen's Third Army, against Foch's Ninth Army. Foch's right and center were slowly forced back to the south of the marshes of Saint Gond.

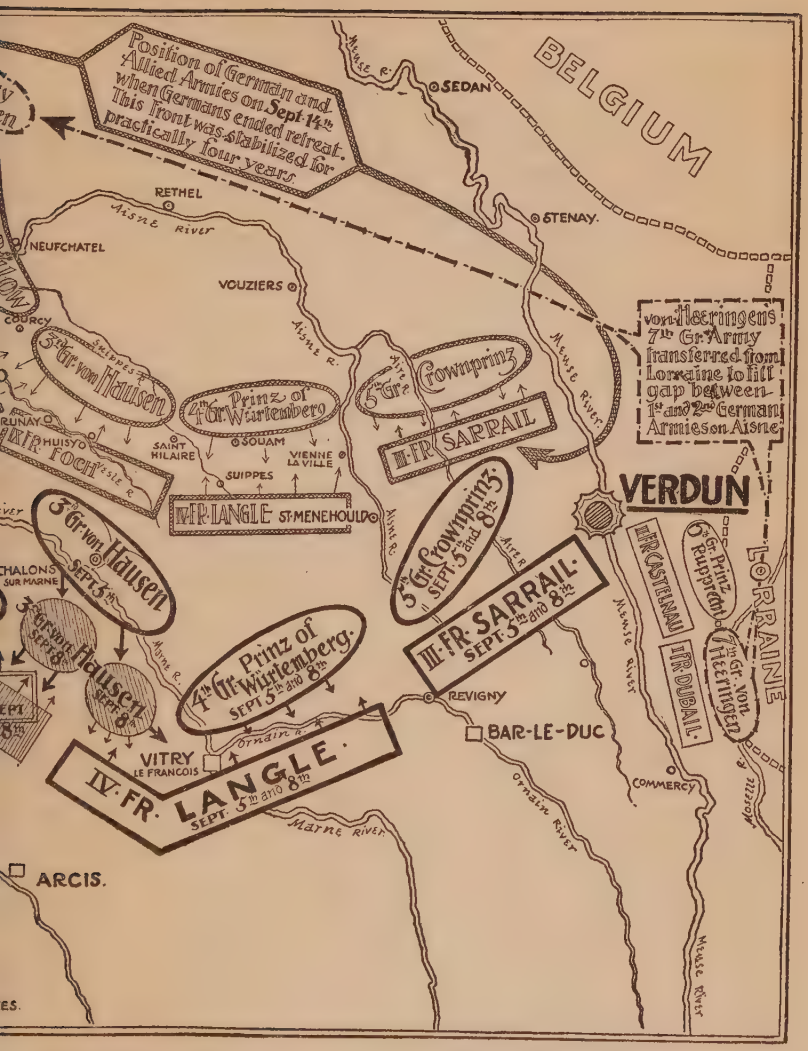
It was a brilliant effort of Von Bülow, executed with great skill, but it failed to achieve its objective. He was unable to weaken the magnificent resolution of General Foch, whose perspective was not limited to his own battle-field. Foch contemplated the situation as a whole and in its true light. That evening he telegraphed to the commander-in-chief: "Situation excellent!"

Farther to the east the Fourth and Fifth German armies had not been able to gain any marked advantages over Langle's Fourth Army and Sarrail's Third Army. Both were actively engaged on the whole line and hard pressed. The happy addition of two army corps to our forces in the east, one between the French Third and Fourth armies and the other on the Fourth Army's (Langle's) left, resulted in strengthening two weak points in our fighting line.

It was on the evening of September 8 that I felt the victory approaching. I sent instructions to the



This map, revised by Major Desmazes, chief of Marshal Joffre's pers
order for general atta



hows the changed complexion of the battle-field after Joffre gave the
lies on September 4.

armies of my left and center which were to guide their maneuvers while Maunoury was coping with Von Kluck. Marshal French I requested to cross the Marne as soon as possible so as to threaten the rear of Von Kluck's First Army. At the same time D'Espérey, giving a hand to the British, was to push forward with the left of his Fifth Army, going straight north to beyond the Marne. With his right he was to support Foch, helping him to reestablish his position.

As one can see under the influence of circumstances, I again radically modified my plan. We had begun the battle with an operation intended to turn the flank or encircle and destroy the German right. But the movement which Von Kluck, commanding the German right, executed in throwing all his forces against Maunoury had opened a gaping breach between the First and Second German armies—fatal to both if we could take advantage of it. It was into this opening that I then endeavored quickly to push the British army and the left of D'Espérey's Fifth Army. Both commanders and their nearly exhausted armies responded magnificently to this auspicious situation, every detail of which I was following closely by telephone reports.

In striking contrast, since the beginning of the

battle the German supreme command had left its army commanders to conduct their own battles.

The German commanders soon began to feel that the game was hopelessly lost. On the fourth day of the great battle they began the great retreat to save their armies. On the evening of September 8, Lieutenant-Colonel Hentsch, sent for the second time by Von Moltke to the various army headquarters, reached Von Bülow at Montmort, southwest of Epernay.

Hentsch had full powers to give orders in the name of the German general staff. General von Bülow gloomily pictured the situation to him. His army was exhausted by his efforts, its effectiveness was dangerously reduced by heavy losses. The movement of Von Kluck's army in the direction of the river Ourcq, regardless of its mission to cover the Second Army's right flank, which was its first duty, had enabled the French and English armies to turn Von Kluck's right flank and force it to march across the face of Maunoury's Sixth Army and Field Marshal French's British army, suffering terrific losses from the French and English artillery.

Hentsch and Von Bülow agreed that only a vast retreating movement would enable Von Kluck's army to save itself by joining up with the main body of the German armies.

September 9 began the great German strategic retreat.

Our whole right had remained unshaken, and Foch was preparing to resume the offensive with a daring maneuver, when he suddenly saw the enemy's line relax. At this moment men of D'Espérey's left touched the Marne at Château-Thierry, and the British, marching with equal speed, reached the river between Château-Thierry and Ferté-sous-Jouarre.

What had happened was that Von Bülow had given the Second German Army the order to retreat on the morning of the 9th, and the Third German Army had retreated along with its right neighbor.

The same day at about noon, Hentsch arrived at the headquarters of the First German Army. He informed Von Kluck of the situation of the Second Army and of Von Bülow's order to retreat. Then he ordered the First Army also to retreat, making Soissons its objective. He explained that a new army, the Seventh, had been brought from Lorraine to the region of Saint-Quentin, and was about to start a maneuver in an endeavor to save the situation.

I am informed that Von Kluck protested against this decision, but finally consented. The retreat of his army toward the north began that evening in indescribable confusion, as General von Kuhl, Von

Kluck's chief-of-staff, has since acknowledged in his memoirs.

On September 10, when Hentsch, having returned to Luxemburg, showed Von Moltke the exact situation, the latter, who had hoped to confine the retreat to the German right, resigned himself to a general retreat. The plan of retreat was for the German armies to draw back by pivoting around the army of the imperial crown prince.

On the 11th, upon hearing from Von Bülow that there was grave danger of the enemy breaking through the German front in the zone of the Third Army of Von Hausen, a development which would seriously endanger the rears of the Fourth and Fifth armies, Von Moltke finally decided to take all the reins of command in his own hands.

The German commander-in-chief immediately visited the commanders of all the armies. Everywhere he observed signs of confusion and division, and found an attitude of distrust and ill-feeling arising toward himself.

It was while on this rapid trip that he gave the orders to bring the armies of his center and left, the Third, Fourth and Fifth, to a line running from Thuisy, through Suippes, to Sainte-Menehould. This constituted a definite avowal of a general defeat.

Returning to Luxemburg on the night of September 11, Von Moltke immediately took to his bed. Two days later he was replaced by General von Falkenhayn, minister of war, as head of the German Army's general staff.

The battle of the Marne saved the Allied cause. The capital of France was not to be taken, and France was not to be enslaved. The scenes of 1870, when Bismarck and the German field marshal, General von Moltke, dictated terms of peace in the palace of Versailles, were not to be repeated. Our troops had valiantly sustained the long retreat. And when the moment had come to attack, they had rushed into battle with a magnificent élan.

A decisive victory for Germany in the World War depended upon an early crushing defeat of the French armies, so the empire could devote the maximum of its forces against Russia. The first rush of the German armies, 700,000 men, carried it in the fourth and fifth weeks of the conflict almost to the gates of Paris. There on September 5, 1914, the German avalanche was stopped within barely twenty miles of Paris, by the counter-attack of the French armies. In nine days the German armies were driven back eighty-five miles.

My faith in the soldiers of France had been justified a thousandfold. How gloriously they had fought! With what sacrifice, bravery, and valor they had done honor to *la patrie!* With such magnificent heroes at one's command, what general could fail to achieve victory?

From the Belgian frontier to a semicircular line running from the outskirts of Paris to the forts of Verdun—this had been the great area over which the Allied armies had retreated from August 23 to September 5, 1914. Superior German forces had forced us back. But we had withdrawn with the idea of awaiting the best moment to attack.

The opportune moment came on the afternoon of September 5. General von Kluck by a headlong march south of the Marne with the bulk of the troops of his First Army had exposed the right wing of all the German armies to an outflanking movement by the Sixth French Army under General Maunoury.

I had especially organized this army on my extreme left expressly for this attack. The existence of this Sixth French Army was unknown to Von Kluck, who could not at first believe the reports that reached him on the night of September 5 that the few troops he had left north of the Marne to protect his own right flank, which was the extreme right

flank of the entire German army, had been driven back by superior French forces.

General von Kluck made two cardinal mistakes: He allowed his army to lose contact with the Second German Army, commanded by Von Bülow, protecting his left flank, and he underestimated the strength of the French army menacing his right flank.

Our forces were so coordinated that we were able quickly to take advantage of both mistakes. A concentrated attack on Von Kluck's right wing that had just crossed the Therouanne, one of the northern tributaries of the Marne, drove it back across the river. To prevent that flank from being encircled (turned) General von Kluck was forced to swing his great army from a battle front extending generally east to west, about thirty miles, to a new and much shorter line extending almost north to south.

This opened a great gap between his and General von Bülow's Second German Army. Into this gap General d'Espérey's Fifth French Army and the small, gallant, highly trained British regular army, under Field Marshal French, were pressed. This attack, effected with great rapidity and gallantry by the allied French and British forces, shattered the whole German battle front of more than one hundred miles and forced a general withdrawal.

The gap between the First and the Second German armies was held only by a thin line of General von Marwitz's cavalry. While this was being driven back Maunoury, with the Sixth French Army, was endeavoring to turn Von Kluck's right, or north, flank. To avoid the success of this operation, the German supreme command ordered the general retreat to unite and consolidate the German armies again on a shorter front far north of the Marne.

With the enemy in full retreat, the victory depended upon our soldiers' legs; the quick transport of our heavy guns was necessary to make our artillery fire incessant and effective upon the receding enemy.

On September 10, five days after the beginning of the battle, I learned in rapid succession of the drawing back of Von Bülow's Second Army and of Von Kluck's First Army by forced marches. This indicated heavy losses by the enemy, and tremendous successes of our forces. I immediately issued orders for a maneuver that would enable us to turn the perplexities of the enemy into an irreparable disaster for German arms.

General Maunoury, with the Sixth French Army, which had been reinforced by an army corps taken from our forces in Lorraine, was to make the utmost possible effort to turn the right flank of Von Kluck's

First Army. Marshal French, with the British army, and Franchet d'Espérey, with the Fifth French Army, were to press forward a wedge between Von Kluck's First Army and Von Bülow's Second Army. Foch, with the Ninth French Army, and Langle, with the Fourth French Army, were to push forward the center of our 120-mile battle front toward the northeast as rapidly as possible against their retreating adversaries, Von Hausen's Third Army and the Prince of Würtemberg's Fourth Army.

This maneuver not only prevented reinforcement of Von Kluck's retreating army, but it widened the gap between the German First and Second armies, forcing Von Kluck to make a forced retreat northeasterly across the front of Maunoury's Sixth French Army and Field Marshal French's British army. This withdrawal was effected under a heavy enfilading fire of the French and British artillery, causing the gravest losses.

While the great strategic movement was in progress at the western end of the 130-mile front, Sarrail with the Third French Army, abutting on Verdun, made a vigorous advance toward the north against the imperial crown prince's Fifth German Army. The whole battle-line thus engaged, made transfer of troops to reinforce hard-pressed divisions impossible.

General von Kluck's withdrawal under fire, with terrible losses, was nevertheless managed with skill. The pursuit of our troops was necessarily slow. Bridges across streams had been blown up by the retreating German armies. The roads over which our heavy guns had to be transported had crater-like holes made by explosion of heavy shells. Our troops were exhausted by six days of the fierce fighting, without one night of real rest. In spite of their magnificent spirit and will to fight, their tired bodies were incapable of it. Strenuous effort was required to move our heavy guns and munitions forward fast enough to take full advantage of the enemy's withdrawal.

The German retreat ended gradually between the 14th and 16th of September. Their armies, on the whole, had gone back in good order. This was especially true of the armies of the German left, which had been farthest removed from the region about Paris where the decisive struggle occurred.

It was evident to me from all my reports that the enemy, in spite of his forced retreat of more than eighty-five miles and in spite of his losses, was not broken in spirit. He was now preparing to accept further battle along new positions which he was organizing north of the rivers Aisne and Vesle and be-

tween the rivers Suippes and Meuse. Reinforcements had arrived from the east Prussian front to strengthen the German battle-line in northern France, and to fill up with replacement the gaps made during nine days of incessant and victorious battle.

The utmost efforts of Maunoury's Sixth Army to outflank Von Kluck's First Army were not successful. The principal part of Maunoury's forces were stopped in their advance by tenacious resistance and terrific counter-attacks by Von Kluck, reinforced by a new Seventh German Army under Von Heeringen, encountered on the plateau between the rivers Aisne and Oise. The Germans realized that their entire forces might be threatened with destruction if Maunoury turned their flank at that point. They fought desperately and successfully to prevent it. The losses were heavy on both sides.

I realized that a strategic balance was being established all along the front. From the river Oise on the west to the river Meuse on the east, and even further eastward through Lorraine, the Vosges Mountains, right up to the Swiss frontier, the two enemy hosts, three million men, were gradually balancing one another on a battle front more than four hundred kilometers long.

I therefore decided to rush to our left, the point

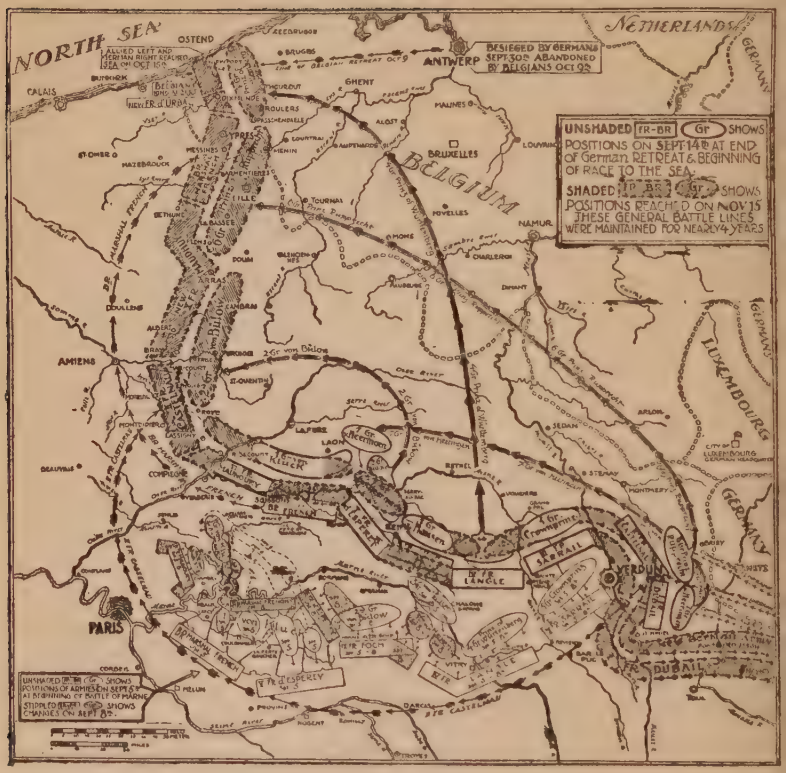
where the front was least stabilized, all the troops that could safely be taken from those parts of the battle-line where a strategic balance or deadlock had already been achieved. My aim was to overcome the enemy's resistance by widely outflanking him on the northwest.

I immediately organized the following forces on the north of the river Oise: the Second Army, under General Castelnau, which came from Lorraine, and two new armies, the Tenth under General de Maud'huy and the Eighth under General d'Urbal.

General von Falkenhayn, the new commander-in-chief of the German armies, was prompted by a similar impulse as myself. He, too, was withdrawing troops from his stabilized fronts and rushing them to the northwest, toward the north coast of France. He reinforced his right with Von Bülow's Second Army, withdrawn from the Aisne, Prince Rupprecht's Sixth Army, withdrawn from Lorraine, and the Prince of Würtemberg's Fourth Army, coming from Champagne.

The battle was spreading northward with the speed of a forest fire. "The race to the sea" was on.

The use of the term "the race to the sea" in explaining this last phase of the battle begun at the Marne on September 5 does not mean that each of the



This map revised by the French army staff, shows the final phase of the Battle of the Marne, in which the Germans, after retreating, hurled their armies northwest toward the North Sea to try to gain possession of the Channel ports.

two belligerents sought to make their still free wing rest on the sea as rapidly as possible. The maneuver was really a race on the part of both the Germans and the Allies to turn one another's flank and thus encircle its enemy. The race ended only when the

sea itself was reached and neither army could go farther. Each side finally had one-half its infantry division and practically all its cavalry engaged between the river Oise and the sea, in the area northward of the stabilized front. The fighting from the Swiss frontier to the Oise River became less intense and more intermittent and sporadic.

Besides the French troops, the Allied forces in this last operation included the whole of the British army, which had just received considerable reinforcements, and also, beginning with the first days of October, the Belgian army. The latter had withdrawn from Antwerp, where it was threatened with total destruction.

During the so-called "race to the sea" the front was constantly wavering. This was caused by the fierce attacks of new units, which both sides threw into the struggle as soon as they arrived as one might throw logs into a fire.

The most violent encounters took place in Flanders between the middle of October and the middle of November. During this time the Germans endeavored to reach the French coast and to take Dunkirk and Calais. In this tremendous effort they used extremely large forces, principally made up of newly created army corps.

In the tragic conflict in Flanders the Allies rushed forward troops of every description to face the Germans. There were sailors and Hindus, as well as black troops from France's African provinces. And the old soldiers of the reserve fought alongside their young comrades, hurried almost prematurely into active service.

The Germans again failed to win their objective. Toward the middle of November both sides ceased general battle. Fighting became intermittent. They were equally exhausted, and reserves of munitions were getting low. The front was now stabilized from the river Oise to the North Sea, just as it had been stabilized from the river Oise to Switzerland at the end of September.

Thus, in the fall of 1914 the German armies found themselves spread out over a front of seven hundred kilometers. They had dug themselves into the ground behind great networks of barbed wire. These were the same German armies which on August 2 had set out upon a lightning campaign—a campaign intended quickly to destroy the French armies and enslave France.

The war of movement on the western front was now ended for the winter. It became a war of siege. For the first time in military history a front of more

than four hundred miles became as strongly fortified as only great fortresses, such as Namur, Verdun and Metz, had been previously. To break through any part of this front required tremendous preparation. In this war of siege on the western front neither side won any signal victories for four years. Thus the war of siege turned into a war of attrition. In this latter development the Allies had tremendous advantages over their enemy.

The Germans found themselves at the end of the war movement facing an adversary who was master of the sea, and therefore free to derive help of all sorts from the whole of the British Empire and all of the French colonies.

As already stated, the stabilization of the western front achieved in the fall of 1914 lasted four years. For an army which based its hopes of victory upon a rapid decision in the west, this stabilization was the worst possible eventuality.

The memoirs of the leading German war personalities which have been published since the armistice, including those of Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, show that as early as the end of 1914 there were many clairvoyant spirits in the empire who realized that even if Germany had not yet lost the war she could at least no longer win it.

With the stabilization of the whole western front the Allies immediately began organizing and strengthening their forces. France of course, had thrown herself into the war with all her strength from the very beginning. For the future she could only hope to sustain her past efforts and further develop her material resources.

Great Britain, however, had been represented in France up to the present by only a half-dozen divisions of infantry. Now, under the energetic impulsion of Lord Kitchener, new divisions were recruited, trained and sent month by month to reinforce the armies in Belgium and France. Here, at the end of the war, there were sixty British divisions.

In order to hold the immense front along which their armies had dug themselves in after the battle of the Marne, the German supreme command was forced to keep the majority of its forces in the western theater of war. This prevented the empire from putting itself economically on the defensive in the west, and therefore resulted in its failure to win decisive victories elsewhere.

What happened in 1915 on the Russian front demonstrates the truth of this last statement. At this time Von Falkenhayn decided upon a big operation against the Russians. The object was to revivify

the Austro-Hungarian armies, that were showing signs of an early collapse.

Von Hindenburg and Von Ludendorff, whose victories in Russia had greatly increased their prestige, really sponsored the offensive. And the action yielded important results. The Russian armies lost a vast amount of territory, immense quantities of equipment and an impressive number of prisoners. But the victory was not decisive. Von Falkenhayn, compelled to leave the bulk of his forces to oppose the French and British, could not force an action against the Russians to a truly victorious conclusion. His means were too limited.

Thus, during the entire duration of the war, Germany was suffering from the consequence of the failure in the great battle of the Marne, five weeks after the war began.

There did come, however, a moment when the horizon of the Central Powers lightened with hopes of a real victory. It was in 1917, when the revolution caused the Russian soldiers to throw down their arms. Then Germany and her associates saw one-half of the great wall that encircled them crumble to the ground.

But this success without glory came too late. America had just cast her lot with the Allies.

The German supreme command now again found itself faced with a strategical problem which called for a quick decision. The Allies on the western front had to be crushed before the youthful legion of the United States had time to cross the ocean.

During the first six months of 1918 Von Hindenburg and Von Ludendorff endeavored to carry out this plan. They failed! Once more the invading hosts were stopped almost at the very gates of Paris. The Allied cause, which in 1914 had been saved by the battle of the Marne, was finally crowned with definite victory in 1918 by this battle which history has called the "Second Battle of the Marne."

General Joffre's Orders, Aug. 25, 1914.

Outlining the Conditions Under Which the Allies' Retreat Was to Take Place.

GENERAL ORDER NO. 2.

1—It being impossible to carry out the proposed offensive, further operations will be so conducted as to build up again on our left a force sufficient to resume the attack. This will be achieved by the junction of the Fourth and Fifth French armies, the British army, and the new troops taken from the east. In the meantime, the other armies will check the enemy's efforts as long as necessary.

2—During the retreat the Third, Fourth and Fifth armies will each keep track of the movements of their neighboring armies, with which they must remain in contact. The retreat will be covered by rear-guards left in favorable positions. They should exploit every obstacle to stop the march of the enemy, making short and violent counter-attacks, in which the artillery will be the principal weapon.

3—Limits of the zones of action of the different armies:

Army W (British army). To the northwest of the line running through Le Cateau-Vermand-Nesle.

Fourth and Fifth Armies. Between this last line of the west (the line itself excluded) and the line on the east running through Stenay-Grandpré-Suippes-Condé-sur-Marne (the line itself included).

Third Army, including the army of Lorraine. Between the line on the west running through Sassey-Fléville-Ville-sur-Tourbe-Vitry-le-François (the line itself included) and the line on the east running through Vigneulles-Void-Gondrecourt (the line itself included).

4—At the extreme left, between Picquigny and the sea, the territorial divisions of the north will form a barrier along the Somme. They will be supported by the Sixty-first and Sixty-second reserve divisions.

5—The cavalry corps along the Authie should be ready to follow the advance of the extreme left.

6—Before Amiens, between Domart-en-Ponthieu and Corbie, or behind the Somme, between Picquigny and Vellers-Bretonneaux, a new group of forces will be constituted from the 27th of August to the 2d of September. The troops consisting of the Seventh Army Corps, four reserve divisions, and perhaps another active army corps, will be transported by railroad. This group should be ready to assume the

offensive in the general direction of Saint-Pol-Arras, or Arras-Bapaume.

7—THE ARMY W (British army) behind the Somme, from Buay-sur-Somme to Ham, should be ready to go either north toward Bertincourt, or east toward Le Catelet.

8—THE FIFTH ARMY will have the majority of its forces along the offensive front in the region of Vermand-Saint-Quentin-Moy, ready to go in the general direction of Bohain. The right of this army will hold the line La Fère-Laon-Craonne-Saint-Ermé.

9—FOURTH ARMY. Behind the Aisne, along the front Guinicourt-Vouziers, or in case this is impossible, along the front Berry-au-Bac-Rheims-Montagne de Rheims, always reserving, however, means of taking the offensive toward the north.

10—THIRD ARMY. Resting its right upon the fortified town of Verdun, and its left upon the defile of Grandpré or at Varennes-Sainte-Menehould.

11—All the positions indicated should be organized with the greatest care, so that the maximum of resistance can be offered the enemy.

12—THE FIRST AND SECOND ARMIES will continue to engage the enemy forces opposed to them. In case they are forced back, they will have as zones of action: Second Army between the road Frouard-

Toul-Vaucouleurs (the road itself included): First Army south of the road Chatel-Dompaire-Lamarche-Montigny-le-Roi (the road itself included).

The General, Commander-in-Chief,
(Signed) JOFFRE.

P. A. The General, Major-General,
(Signed) BELIN.

VON MOLTKE'S ORDERS AUG. 27, 1914.

Outlining the Full Details of the March of the German Armies Toward Paris.

The enemy, articulated in three groups, has attempted to check the German offensive. On the northern wing, opposite our First and Second armies, he has maintained primarily a defensive attitude. Here he has been aided by the English army and parts of the Belgian army. His plan, which was to make a flank attack upon the German right wing, failed, because of the large outflanking movement of our First Army.

Between Mézières and Verdun is the central group of the enemy. The left wing of this group took the offensive and attacked our Fourth Army above the cut of Semoy. The offensive not succeeding, this central group endeavored by an attack from Verdun to

cut off the left wing of our Fifth Army from Metz. Here they also failed.

A third powerful group of the enemy has tried to penetrate Lorraine, and the upper plain of the Rhine, to somehow reach Strassburg, the Rhine and the lower Main. Our Sixth and Seventh armies have succeeded with hard fighting in victoriously throwing back this attack.

All the active French army corps, including two newly formed divisions, the Forty-fourth and Forty-fifth, have already been engaged and have suffered perceptible losses. Also, the majority of the reserve divisions have participated in the fighting and find themselves greatly weakened. Here, one cannot as yet judge the capacity of resistance which actually should be attributed to the Franco-English armies.

The Belgian army has collapsed completely. It will not be able to fall in line and participate in an offensive on free territory. At Antwerp can be found 100,000 Belgian soldiers, both field and garrison troops. These troops are greatly exhausted and hardly capable of assuming the offensive.

The French, that is at least their armies of the north and center, are in full retreat toward the southwest and east—toward Paris. During the course of this retreat they will probably offer a new and des-

perate resistance. All reports from France confirm that the enemy is fighting for time and that he is endeavoring to keep the majority of the German forces on the French front to facilitate an offensive by the Russians.

The Anglo-French forces of the north and center, after losing the line of the Meuse, can offer a new resistance behind the Aisne; the extreme left wing probably reaching just to Saint-Quentin, La Fère and Laon, and the right wing to the west of the Argonne near Sainte-Menehould. The following line of resistance will be without doubt the Marne, the wing resting on Paris. It is equally possible that the forces will concentrate upon the lower Seine.

The situation at the south wing of the French armies is not yet clear. It is not impossible that the adversary to relieve his north wing and his center will resume the offensive in Lorraine. If the French wing on the south falls back, it will unceasingly endeavor, supporting itself upon the fortified triangle Langres-Dijon-Besançon, either to outflank the German armies of the south, or to maintain its forces ready to reassume the offensive.

One must calculate that the French army will augment itself with new formations, even though at the same time it makes up its original numbers. If, for

the moment, it has at its disposal only the class of 1914, outside a few weak garrison troops, one must admit, however, that it will call next year's levy, as well as all the free forces from Northern Africa and the navy. The formation of bands of guerillas will no doubt also be ordered by the French government.

England also is hurriedly organizing a new army of volunteers and territorials. But they can hardly hope for these forces to go into action before four or six months.

It is necessary, therefore, by a rapid advance of the German army toward Paris, to give no rest to the French army, to prevent the organization of new forces and to take away from the country the greatest part of its fighting means.

A general government will be constituted for Belgium, which will be under German administration. Belgium ought to serve as the zone of the rear for the First, Second and Third armies, and, therefore, a considerable shortening of the lines of communication of our right wing should be achieved.

THE FIRST ARMY making use of the Second Cavalry Corps, will march west of the Oise toward the lower Seine. It ought to be ready to intervene in the engagements of the Second Army. The protection of the flank of the armies also falls upon it. In

its zone of operations it will prevent the formation of new enemy units. The forces (Third and Ninth reserve army corps) left in the rear to besiege Antwerp are under the direct orders of the supreme command. The Fourth Reserve Army Corps is again put at the disposition of the army.

THE SECOND ARMY, making use of the First Cavalry Corps, will push upon Paris, passing between La Fère and Laon. It must besiege and capture Maubeuge and later La Fère, as well as Laon—the latter in cooperation with the Third Army. The First Cavalry Corps will reconnoiter in front of the Second and Third armies. It will inform the Third Army.

THE THIRD ARMY will push upon Château-Thierry, passing between Laon and Guinicourt (west of Neufchatel). It will carry Hirson by storm, as well as Laon with the fort of Condé—these two last points in cooperation with the Second Army. The First Cavalry Corps, operating before the Second and Third armies, will inform the Third Army.

THE FOURTH ARMY will march upon Epernay by way of Rheims. The Fourth Cavalry Corps attached to the Fifth Army will also inform the Fourth Army. The necessary siege material for the taking of Rheims will be put at the disposition of the army. The Sixth Army Corps will be transferred to the Fifth Army.

THE FIFTH ARMY, to which is attached the Sixth Army Corps, will push toward the line Châlons-sur-Marne—Vitry-le-François. It will form in echelons to the left and near, so as to assure the protection of the flank of the armies until the Sixth Army is able to undertake this task to the west of the Meuse. The Fourth Cavalry Corps remains subordinate to the Fifth Army. Verdun will be isolated. In addition to five brigades of "Landwehr" from Nied the Eighth and Tenth divisions of "Ersatz" will be transferred to the Fifth Army as soon as they are no longer used by the Sixth.

THE SIXTH ARMY, with the Seventh Army and the Third Cavalry Corps, while keeping close liaison with Metz, must prevent the inroad of the enemy into Lorraine and lower Alsace. The intrenched camp of Metz is attached to it. If the enemy draws back, the Sixth Army, making use of the Third Cavalry Corps, will cross the Moselle between Toul and Epinal and go in the general direction of Neufchateau.

It will be from there responsible for protecting the left flank of the armies. It will isolate Nancy and Toul; it will be satisfied with covering Epinal. For these operations it will be reinforced by units from the Seventh Army (Fourteenth and Fifteenth army corps and a division of "Ersatz"). On the other

hand, it will cede the Eighth and Tenth divisions of "Ersatz" to the Sixth Army. The Seventh Army will become independent at this moment.

THE SEVENTH ARMY will at first be subordinated to the Sixth Army. When the latter has crossed the Moselle the Seventh Army will recover its independence. The intrenched camp of Strassburg and the fortified works of the upper Rhine will continue to be under its jurisdiction. Its mission will then consist in preventing the enemy piercing between Epinal and the Swiss frontier.

It would be opportune for it to build solid intrenchments in front of Epinal and from there just to the mountains, as well as in the valley of the Rhine adjoining Neuf-Brisach; and also for it to place the center of gravity of its forces behind its right wing. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth army corps, as well as a division of "Ersatz," will pass at this moment to the Sixth Army.

All the armies ought to operate in perfect accord and aid one another to capture the different terrestrial obstacles. Strong resistance encountered on the Aisne and subsequently on the Marne may render necessary the turning of the armies from the southwest toward the south.

A rapid advance is immediately demanded so as

not to allow the French the time to reorganize and offer a serious resistance.

The armies, therefore, will report the moment they will be able to begin the advance movement.

Every revolt of the populace should be smothered in its beginning.

(Signed) MOLTKE.

GENERAL JOFFRE'S ORDERS, SEPT. 1, 1914.

Prescribing the Continuation of the Retreat After the Failure of the Attempt to Reorganize Along the line Verdun-Laon-Amiens.

GENERAL ORDER NO. 4.

1—In spite of the tactical successes obtained by the Third, Fourth and Fifth French armies in the region of the Meuse and at Guise, the flanking movement effected by the enemy upon the left wing of the Fifth Army and insufficiently arrested by the English troops and the Sixth Army obliges the entire line of our troops to pivot around our right.

As soon as the Fifth Army has escaped the danger of being surrounded, which is pronounced on its left, the Third, Fourth and Fifth armies will together reassume the offensive.

2—The retreat can conduct the armies backward

for a certain time in the general direction north to south.

The Fifth Army must not under any circumstances permit the enemy to capture its left; the other armies, less pressed in the execution of their movement, can stop, face the enemy, and seize every favorable occasion to inflict a check upon him.

The movement of each army must always be such that it will not uncover its neighboring armies, and the army commanders should constantly communicate their intentions, their movements, and their instructions.

3—The lines separating the zones of march of the different armies are the following:

Between the Fifth and the Fourth armies (detachment Foch) route Rheims-Epernay (to the Fourth Army); route Montmort-Sézanne-Rommilly (to the Fifth Army).

Between the Fourth and the Third armies; route Grandpré-Sainte-Menehould-Révigny (to the Fourth Army).

In the zone assigned to the Fourth Army, the detachment (army) of General Foch will remain constantly in liaison with the Fifth Army, the space between this detachment and the mass of the Fourth

Army being guarded by the Seventh and Ninth cavalry divisions, coming from the Fourth Army, and sustained by detachments of infantry furnished by that army. (The Seventh Cavalry Division belonged to the Third Army, and in spite of this order, it remained so).

The Third Army will execute its movement under cover of the heights of the Meuse.

4—One can consider the final limit of the retreating movement, without implying that this limit will necessarily be attained, the moment the armies will be in the following positions:

A newly formed cavalry corps behind the Seine to the south of Bray.

Fifth Army behind the Seine, to the south of Nogent-sur-Seine.

Fourth Army (detachment Foch) behind the Aube, to the south of Arcis-sur-Aube (Foch's detachment became Ninth Army).

Third Army to the north of Bar-le-Duc.

The Third Army will be at this moment reinforced by the reserve divisions (Fifty-fourth, Sixty-fifth, Sixty-seventh and Seventy-fifth) which will quit the heights of the Meuse to participate in the offensive movement.

If the circumstances permit part of the First and Second armies will be called in sufficient time to take part in the offensive. Finally, the mobile troops of the intrenched camp of Paris can also take part in the general action.

The General, Commander-in-Chief.

(Signed) JOFFRE.

For amplification:

The Major-General.

(Signed) BELIN.

VON MOLTKE'S ORDER, SEPT. 2, 1914.

Radio from German Headquarters Indicating the Intention of the German Command to Cut Off the French from Paris.

The intention of the supreme command is to cut off the French from Paris to the southeast. The First Army will follow the Second in echelons and will insure the protection of the flank of all the armies . . .

It is opportune that the cavalry of the army appear before Paris and destroy the railroads leading into the city.

(Signed) MOLTKE.

General Joffre's Orders, Sept. 4, 1914.

Sent Out from French Headquarters at 10 P. M. for the General French Counter-offensive.

GENERAL ORDER NO. 6.

1—It behooves us to profit from the adventurous situation of the First German Army and to concentrate against it the efforts of the Allied arms of the extreme left.

All preparations will be taken during the day of September 5, in view of beginning the attack on the sixth.

2—The arrangement to be realized on the evening of September 5 is as follows:

(a) All the forces making up the Sixth Army to the northeast of Meaux ready to cross the Ourcq between Lisy-sur-Ourcq and Mayen-Multien, in the general direction of Château-Thierry.

The disposable parts of the cavalry corps which are in the proximity will be put under the orders of General Maunoury for this operation.

(b) The British army to be established along the front Changis-Coulommiers, facing east and ready to attack in the general direction of Montmirail.

(c) The Fifth Army, closing in slightly on its left, will establish itself along the front Courtacon-Esternay-Sézanne, and be ready to attack in the general direction south to north. The Second Cavalry Corps will assume the liaison between the British army and the Fifth Army.

(d) The Ninth Army will cover the right of the Fifth Army in holding the southern outlets of the marsh of Saint Gond, and in bringing a part of its forces to the plateau to the north of Sézanne.

3—The offensive will be taken by these different armies from the morning of September 6.

(Signed) JOFFRE.

VON MOLTKE'S ORDER, SEPT. 4, 1914.

The First and Second armies shall remain facing the front, east of Paris; the First Army between the Oise and the Marne, occupying the crossings of the Marne to the west of Château-Thierry; the Second Army between the Marne and the Seine, occupying the crossings of the Seine between Nogent and Niery, inclusive.

The Third Army will march upon Troyes and to the east.

(Signed) MOLTKE.

Von Moltke's Orders, Sept. 5, 1914.

By Radio from German Headquarters, Announcing that the Allied Armies Have Escaped Being Surrounded and Concentrated Their Forces in the Region of Paris.

The enemy has escaped from the enveloping movement of the First and Second armies, and has succeeded, using detached units to operate his liaison with Paris. The reports and information coming from reliable agents permit the additional conclusion that the enemy has transported troops toward the west from the line Toul-Belfort, and that he also continues to retire his forces before the front of our Third to Fifth armies.

The pushing back of all the French armies toward the Swiss frontier is, therefore, no longer possible. It is now probably necessary to wait until the enemy, in order to protect his capital and menace the right flank of the German armies, concentrates important forces and takes new formations.

The First and Second armies ought, in consequence, to maintain themselves before the front, east of Paris. Their mission is offensively to oppose themselves to all enemy enterprise coming from the direction of Paris, and reciprocally to sustain one another.

The Fourth and Fifth armies are still in contact

with a strong adversary. They ought to push their adversary back continuously toward the southeast. In this fashion the passage of the Moselle, between Toul and Epinal, will be open to the Sixth Army. One cannot as yet predict if, with the Sixth and Seventh armies in liaison, one will succeed in throwing back important fractions of the enemy toward the Swiss territory.

The task of the Sixth and Seventh armies remains first of all to grapple energetically the enemy forces which face them. As soon as possible they must begin the attack in the direction of the Moselle, between Toul and Epinal, always covering themselves in the directions of the two fortified towns.

The Third Army will take its direction of march along Troyes-Vendeuvre. According to the situation, this army will be called either to support the Second and First armies over the Seine in the west, or to participate in the combats of our left wing in the south and southeast.

In consequence, his Majesty orders:

1—The First and Second armies will continue to face the front east of Paris so as to stop offensively every effort of the enemy coming from Paris; the First Army between the Oise and Marne (the crossings of the Marne down-stream from Château-Thierry

are to be held in view of a passing of the river); the Second Army between the Marne and the Seine (it is important to seize the crossing of the Seine between Nogent and Niery). It is recommended that the mass of the armies be kept sufficiently far away from Paris so that they have their liberty of movement.

The Second Cavalry Corps will remain under the command of the Second Army and will detail a division to the First Cavalry Corps. The First Cavalry Corps, which remains subordinate to the Second Army, will give a division to the Third Army.

The task of the Second Cavalry Corps consists in observing the front north of Paris between the Marne and the lower Seine and reconnoitring between the edge of the Somme and the edge of the lower Seine. The distant exploration over the edge of the line Lille-Amiens will fall to the aviation of the First Army.

The First Cavalry Corps will reconnoiter to the south of Paris between the Marne and the Seine, down-stream from Paris. It will explore in the direction of Caen, Alençon, Le Mans, Tours and Bourges, and will receive the aviation help that this exploration demands.

The Second Cavalry Corps have to destroy the railroads into Paris as near Paris as possible.

2—The Third Army will progress toward Troyes-Vendeuvre. It will receive a division of cavalry ceded by the First Cavalry Corps, which should explore toward the line Nevers-le-Breusot, using the necessary aviation.

3—The Fourth and Fifth armies ought, by a firm progression to the southwest, to open the passage of the upper Moselle to the Sixth and Seventh armies; right wing of the Fourth Army by Vitry-le-François and Montierender; right wing of the Fifth Army by Révigny-Stainville-Morley. The Fifth Army will assume with its left wing the task of covering the fortified positions of the Meuse. This wing must take by storm the forts of Troyon, Paroches, and the camp of Romains. The Fourth Cavalry Corps will remain under the orders of the Fifth Army and will reconnoiter before the fronts of the Fourth and Fifth armies toward the line Dijon-Besançon-Belfort. It will also inform the Fourth Army.

4—The task of the Fifth and Seventh armies remains unchanged.

(Signed) MOLTKE.

APPROXIMATE STRENGTH OF THE ARMIES AT THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE MARNE

(*Figures furnished from French Archives.*)

FRENCH ARMY

Infantry	550,000
Artillery	90,000
Cavalry	40,000
Sappers, Engineers	30,000
Total fighting men	710,000
Men behind the lines (reserves)	50,000
Total	760,000

BRITISH ARMY

Infantry	50,000
Artillery	13,000
Cavalry	8,000
Sappers, Engineers	5,000
Total fighting men	76,000
Men behind the lines (reserves)	6,000
Total	82,000
Combined French and British forces	842,000

GERMAN ARMY

Infantry	470,000
Artillery	100,000
Cavalry	40,000
Pioneers or trench diggers	20,000
Total fighting men	630,000
Men behind the lines (reserves)	50,000
Total	680,000
Grand total	1,522,000

OFFICIAL FIGURES OF LOSSES IN THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE MARNE

FRENCH LOSSES

(In the Marne Battle out of 760,000 men engaged.)
(*From Archives of the French War Office.*)

Dead	21,000
Wounded	122,000
Missing	84,000

The above list includes 1,000 officers killed, 3,000 officers wounded, 400 officers missing or prisoners.

GERMAN LOSSES

(In the Marne Battle out of 680,000 men engaged.)
(*From Archives of the German General Staff, Berlin.*)

Dead	43,000
Wounded	173,000
Missing	40,000

BRITISH LOSSES

(In France up to December, 1914. At start of the Marne Battle 82,000 men were engaged, but Britain kept pouring troops into France as her battle-lines were being decimated.)

(*From Archives of the British War Office.*)

Dead	18,174
Wounded	50,969
Missing	26,511

British naval losses in that time were 4,986 dead.

CROWN PRINCE WILHELM'S

Narrative as Commander of the Fifth German Army at the Battle of the Marne.

II

THE German general staff did not fail in the Marne campaign of 1914. The tragic climax, following the marvelous feats of the imperial army in the battle of the frontiers, must be laid at the door of a few men who proved themselves unequal to their tasks when called upon for decisive action. Inherent insufficiency of a leader is due to fate. It is not the fault of a system.

An ancient maxim says: "Leaders are born, not appointed."

The identical system produced Count Schlieffen, the military giant who conceived the German plan of campaign, and his successor, the younger Moltke, who squandered the heritage of his predecessors. Both were rooted in the soil of the self-same system.

The mistakes of the German supreme command are cited as proving the complete bankruptcy of "that damnable old system." One of the proudest pillars of the venerable state structure of the past, the German general staff, is constantly being pilloried by political propagandists who fail to make any distinc-

tion between the *system* and the *personalities*. A plan, however good, may be spoiled by bungling execution.

The responsibility for the tremendous and staggering tragedy of the Marne falls directly upon General von Moltke. He believed so little in his own star that he remained behind at his headquarters, a little red brick school in Luxemburg, where it was impossible for him to keep in close contact with his fighting troops.

He was utterly incapable of those "inspiring slogans" which Count Schlieffen declared an absolute essential for a "Modern Alexander"—the sort of burning phrases which his antagonist Joffre sent forth, and which reacted on his troops like the blare of martial music. Moltke, as he himself frankly confessed, "mortally hated all hurrah sentiments," and, far more serious for a military commander, he lacked all sensitiveness to the moral factors in the conduct of the war.

The kaiser has been repeatedly criticized for the choice of the younger Moltke as chief of staff in 1906 on the retirement of Count Schlieffen. Gossip would have it that my father, the emperor, was bent on having "a Moltke" at his side, since the kaiser's grandfather had had Moltke's uncle as his chief of staff

in the victorious wars of 1864, 1866, 1870 and 1871. Some even said that the kaiser had fondly cherished the idea of being his own chief of staff in case of war, and named Moltke because he was extremely amenable.

All these charges were untrue. The kaiser undoubtedly chose Moltke because he was not a servile courtier, but an individual with backbone who spoke to his emperor as man to man. The kaiser and Moltke were friends. Moltke had his Majesty's full confidence, and this unrestricted confidence of the supreme war lord in his responsible adviser was an absolute necessity for successful cooperation.

It is popularly believed that Moltke originally had asked the kaiser not to entrust him with the office of chief of staff, as he doubted his own ability to fill it. I know this also is untrue. Moltke merely insisted on certain very sensible conditions when taking over the office—conditions which aimed at assuring his success. This conscientious attitude naturally intensified the kaiser's confidence in his choice, and he unhesitatingly accepted Moltke's conditions. The emperor did not desire in the least a "mere puppet" as chief of staff.

But there were other generals available at the time of Moltke's appointment who were better fitted for

the post. Field Marshal von der Goltz's name has often been mentioned of late. I myself am convinced that, as far as character and natural gifts are concerned, Von der Goltz would have been a most suitable man for the post. But I also know that no such state of confidence prevailed between the kaiser and Von der Goltz as existed between the kaiser and Moltke. Marshal von der Goltz himself cheerfully acclaimed the choice of Moltke.

I personally doubt whether Count Schlieffen was really serious when he recommended Moltke as his successor. It was not that he considered Moltke lacking in ability, but rather that he felt himself still in such splendid condition, both physically and mentally, that he believed he was capable of conducting his office for a long time to come. The count's advanced age, seventy-three, however, made it necessary to pick a successor for him while he was still alive and could give the man who was to shoulder his burdens the benefit of his instruction.*

The possibility must also be considered that the kaiser's advisers directed his attention to Moltke for reasons of their own and to gratify their own ends. The emperor could hardly know that the serious, high-minded Moltke, imbued with an exemplary loy-

* Count Schlieffen was born in 1833 and died in 1913.

alty and possessing an untiring will to work, should utterly lack those traits of character which make a man a leader in the field. Only the actuality of war could demonstrate this.

Count Schlieffen, whenever somebody mentioned any general as a born field marshal, would say: "That will be shown soon enough in case of war." Still another statement of Schlieffen's fits well here: "The sovereign naturally believes that the man he is promoting will prove to be a genuine leader in the field. He is often disappointed, as field marshals cannot be made by a mere promotion. They are born! They are predestined!"

In peace-time the kaiser was under the impression that in choosing Moltke he had chosen well. War soon proved to him how much he had been deluded.

Count Schlieffen's plan of a war on two fronts called first for a quick and thorough decision in the west. This desired decision could not be attained by a frontal attack upon the fortresses along the Franco-German frontier. It was necessary to envelop the enemy's left wing, resting on the Belgian frontier, at the same time as an advance was made along his front.

According to the original plan which Schlieffen elaborated between 1894 and 1899, the First and

Second armies, forming the German right, would cross the Meuse River along the front Douchery-Stenay, being covered by the Seventh Army against attacks of the Belgians on their northern flank.

The German left, consisting of the Fourth and Fifth armies, was to carry Nancy by storm and march upon Neufchateau, their southern flank being covered by the Sixth Army. The Third Army was to connect the two groups of armies, one of which was to pass to the south and the other to the north of the powerful barrier, Verdun-Toul.

As the enveloping movement progressed, the frontal attack was to be abandoned. The turning of nearly the entire German force upon Metz as a pivot provided a vast zone of operations across Belgium and northern France. The movement was planned not merely to envelop the first French line of defense, but also the second—the line Rheims-La Fère.

Moltke, in spite of certain changes in apportioning his military effectives, held on to Schlieffen's basic scheme—the offensive along the whole French front and the enveloping movement by way of Belgium. He did not, however, dare to leave Alsace and Lorraine so unguarded as Schlieffen had contemplated. And we shall see that it was this timidity of Moltke's

concerning Alsace and Lorraine which eventually played an important part in causing the tragedy of the Marne.

According to Moltke's plan, the First and Second armies were to invade Belgium and cross the Meuse River between the Dutch frontier and Namur. The Third, Fourth and Fifth armies were to cross southern Belgium and Luxemburg and reach the Meuse River between Namur and Verdun. The Sixth and Seventh armies were to occupy an intrenched position along the French frontier, south of Metz.

At the outset of hostilities in early August, the conduct of operations by the enemy commands seemed to favor a speedy destruction of their armies. The hope of a final decision in a short time ran high in the German camp.

Both sides were extremely aggressive from the outset. A tremendous field battle was soon under way along the international frontier. It began in Lorraine on August 20 and in a few days had embraced all the armies as far north as Namur and Mons.

In this gigantic action both numbers and topography were decidedly to Germany's advantage. That a thorough and decisive victory was not achieved is because of the self-effacing conduct which the German supreme command indulged in at this time.

It left the leadership of the all-important strategical right wing in the hands of subordinate commanders.

The frontier battle was a tactical victory for the Germans, but it left the French and English armies, although beaten and severely shaken up, still a formidable fighting-machine and able to conduct an orderly retreat.

The question now arose: Was it permissible still to hold to the original plan, aiming at a speedy decision in open field battles along the western front, after these battles had yielded only unsatisfactory strategic results?

The answer was an unqualified "Yes," if the Schlieffen plan, providing for crushing the enemy by sheer masses concentrated on the German right, was fulfilled. Unfortunately, by the end of August, 1914, the strong right wing anticipated by Schlieffen was hardly noticeable. Count von Moltke, on August 25, withdrew two army corps from the right wing of the western front to reinforce the eastern front.

The necessity of guarding lines of communication all through Belgium had deprived the right wing of still further troops. Two army corps were covering the fortress of Antwerp, where the bulk of the Belgian field army had taken refuge. An additional

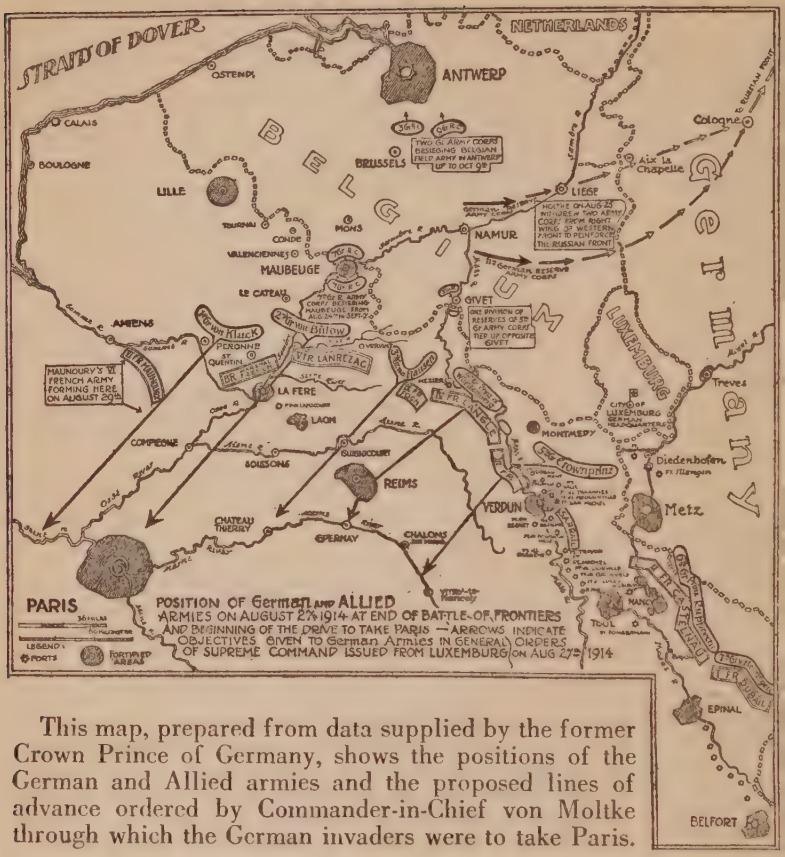
army corps was besieging the fortress of Maubeuge. And one division of reserves of the Third German Army was tied up opposite Givet.

At the beginning of the German offensive on the western front, the three armies of the right wing had consisted of thirty-four divisions of infantry. On August 27, only twenty-three divisions were left for immediate action in field operations. One-third of the forces had been withdrawn for other purposes.

It was now rather late, perhaps too late to bring up strong reinforcements by railroad from Lorraine. These reinforcements would have had to come from around Aix-la-Chapelle, by forced marches through Belgium, as it was not feasible at this time to use the Belgian railroads in the occupied area.

The order of the supreme command dated August 27 adheres to the Schlieffen plan as far as directions are concerned. The five armies advancing through Belgium and northern France were instructed to proceed as follows:

First Army, toward the lower Seine, west of the Oise River; Second Army, toward Paris; Third Army, toward Château-Thierry; Fourth Army, toward Epernay by way of Rheims, and the Fifth Army, toward Châlons-sur-Marne and Vitry-le-François, after circling around Verdun to the northeast.



This map, prepared from data supplied by the former Crown Prince of Germany, shows the positions of the German and Allied armies and the proposed lines of advance ordered by Commander-in-Chief von Moltke through which the German invaders were to take Paris.

This order was dictated by the original underlying thought of the Schlieffen plan—the encircling of the left wing of the enemy. But what about the numerical strength of the German armies? The First Army marching without a fixed destination

toward the lower Seine consisted of only ten infantry divisions [about 150,000 men]. The other four armies being brought into play along a front reaching from Paris to Vitry-le-François, over one hundred miles by air-line, comprised but thirty-three divisions. Of these, a number of units belonging to the Fifth Army could not be employed in any field action, as it was necessary to cover Verdun on the north and west.

This seeming contradiction between direction of march and strength of armies is entirely explained by the fact that the general orders of August 27 were based upon conditions utterly unlike those actually prevailing. The supreme command labored under the delusion that the hardest part of the campaign on the western front was over. The retreating enemy was expected to fight furiously and make a stand at every suitable location, especially along the rivers.

But Moltke did not believe that the Allies intended to bring about a decisive action in a second extensive field engagement. He believed they were merely intent on tiring out their pursuers and endeavoring to prolong the war long enough to profit from the Russian offensive then under way on the eastern front.

This extremely optimistic view of the general situation led the supreme command to believe that all

that was left to do in the west was a slight "finishing up"! And this, it was believed, could be best achieved by a merciless pursuit of the Allies, making it impossible for them to reorganize their depleted forces and consolidate their lines.

The plan of the supreme command was simply to overrun the enemy's country on as broad a front as possible. No definite detailed goal was held in view.

It is only fair to admit that the supreme command's exaggerated optimism was due to the reports of victory which they received from subordinate commanders who painted the situation in a too rosy hue. This encouraged Moltke to underestimate the enemy's efficiency and power. But, even if the supreme command had had a correct appreciation of the actual situation, the attempted solution by "keeping after the enemy along the whole front" was hardly suitable.

This solution might have been possible as far as the First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth armies were concerned. They were operating in the open. But what about the Sixth and the Seventh armies on our southern wing? These armies faced the powerful chain of French frontier fortresses. Keeping after the enemy here was a matter of siege warfare.

The French, in this area, relying on the power of passive resistance inherent in their line of fortresses, might withdraw units facing the Sixth and Seventh German armies and use them to reinforce their center or left.

Such a maneuver of the French meant a new and formidable battle for the ultimate decision. It was this battle which eventually took place at the Marne.

Now, at the very moment when every possible soldier was needed on our center and right, the supreme command issued an order prescribing an attack by the Sixth and Seventh armies against the Toul-Epinal line. The object was to tie up the French fighting forces in the south so they could not be removed elsewhere. On the surface this might seem like good tactics. But was it?

General Krafft von Delmensingen wrote in his diary at this time: "If the enemy really wishes to retreat, not even God Almighty could stop him. Everywhere we are up against fortifications. The enemy is in a position, even with an inferior fighting force, to hold all fortified sectors long enough to enable the mass to get away."

Thus the fateful situation was brought about that at a time when it was essential to consolidate the entire German fighting forces at the center and right

of the west front, so as effectively to pursue the enemy, not less than twenty-four divisions of infantry, one-third of all the effectives available for action in the field, were employed with a special task. This task, difficult and long drawn out, involved all the elements of siege warfare in a sector where important decisions could not be brought about.

It would have been possible to employ strong parts of these forces—at least half of those tied up in siege warfare—to reinforce the pursuit operations. With almost seerlike wisdom, Count Schlieffen had repeatedly warned against the massing of German troops along this south wing, opposite the French frontier fortresses.

I believe it is fair to say that the gravest of all those blunders in generalship eventually leading to the unsatisfactory result of the Marne campaign, consisted in the unemployment of the Sixth and the Seventh armies in the main action.

The result of this blunder would have been far more serious if the enemy had been wide awake to the advantages which he enjoyed because of the cover offered his right flank by his chain of fortresses.

I cannot better sum up my criticism thus far than by quoting Von Clausewitz, Prussia's great military writer of the eighteenth century.

"Keep your fighting strength well concentrated! This is both the simplest and foremost law of strategy. Nothing should be separated from the mass unless it serves a very immediate purpose. It is wise to be as strong as possible in general, but it is absolutely essential to be strong at the points of decision."

Military genius was conspicuously absent in all the three armies during the campaign culminating with the battle of the Marne. Neither the Germans nor the Allies possessed a leader sufficiently gifted to effect the complete destruction of the enemy. The military strength of both sides was squandered. There was an utter lack of strategic art. The battle was conducted in a wholly mechanical and conventional manner. The resultant trench warfare was the natural outcome of an exhaustion brought on by a failure on both sides to develop a decisive strategy.

"Armies equipped in accord with the latest developments of military science can no longer decisively defeat one another!"

This conclusion is drawn by various modern tacticians from the experience of the battle of the Marne.

I cannot agree with them!

If either the Germans or the Allies had been led by a truly great commander, such as Napoleon or the elder Moltke, the war in France might have ended

with a crushing victory for one side or the other but a few weeks after hostilities began.

The fact that the campaign of 1914 on the western front ended in a draw cannot be logically ascribed to the effect of the new equipment. It was due to lack of generalship! In war, as well as in diplomacy, the imponderables, to use Bismarck's phrase, weigh heavily in the scales. Airplanes, tanks, gas, machine-guns, powerful artillery—these things are important; but even more important is the genius of the commander.

Mobile warfare, aiming at a speedy decision, is not obsolete. It offers today, as always, the opportunity for talent and generalship of the highest order.

Count Schlieffen had prepared long in advance a brilliant plan of quickly destroying the French armies by encircling their left wing. He retired as head of the general staff at the age of seventy-three in 1906. Count von Moltke, his successor, failed to carry out his plan. He weakened the German right wing by sending two army corps to reinforce the eastern front in Poland, and left three and a half additional army corps in Belgium to cover the fortresses of Antwerp, Maubeuge and Givet, still holding out against our siege. He had also abandoned the original Schlieffen plan by tying up a large part of his forces in Alsace

and Lorraine in a mere siege of the French frontier fortresses, whereas all the mobile troops were needed at the vital point.

The Allied armies, after the battle of the frontiers, were badly shaken, but still intact. They were retreating rapidly, but in good order. They had escaped our enveloping movement. Our armies were ordered to pursue them without mercy.

The German pursuit operations conducted along the entire mobile front by General von Kluck's First Army, General von Bülow's Second Army, General von Hausen's Third Army, the Duke of Würtemberg's Fourth Army and my own Fifth Army began on August 27. These operations lasted until the beginning of the battle of the Marne on September 5, 1914.

The general orders of pursuit issued by the German supreme command on August 27 were based largely on conjectures. Neither the direction of the enemy's retreat nor the definite location of our own armies was completely ascertained.

The supreme command assumed that the armies of the Allies' left and center, consisting of Marshal French's British army, General Lanrezac's Fifth French Army, General Foch's Ninth Army and General Langle's Fourth French Army, were in full retreat toward the southwest in the general direction

of Paris. In reality Generals Foch and Langle were engaging the Fourth German Army of the Duke of Würtemberg in the battle at the bridge-heads of the Meuse River between Sedan and Stenay.

General orders of August 27 reported the Allies' loss of positions along the Meuse River opposite my own Fifth Army. As a matter of fact we had not even reached that river at this time.

This utter misunderstanding by the supreme command of the true situation has never been explained. Perhaps the supreme command was dominated by "the-wish-is-father-to-the-thought" sentiment.

On August 28, however, the supreme command came to a clearer conception of the situation. The German Fourth Army, in the midst of the severe battle along the Meuse River, clamored for assistance from both General von Hausen's Third Army, its neighbor on the right, and from my Fifth Army, its neighbor on the left.

But Moltke insisted that General von Hausen continue advancing toward the southwest as ordered, so as to consolidate his somewhat loosened contact with the Second and First armies of the German right wing. The Duke of Würtemberg must take care of himself with what assistance he could get from me.

This was good tactics. The decision of the battle

depended on the right wing, now northwest and north of the Oise River, about ninety miles north of Paris. Any diversion of units of General von Hausen's Third Army toward the left at this moment would have further reduced the number of troops at the essential point where the battle was to be won or lost.

The Duke of Würtemberg's Fourth Army and later my Fifth Army could spend considerable time in forcing the Meuse River by frontal attacks without endangering the general situation. It was even an advantage to tie up the enemy in defensive operations at this point. The longer he made a stand along the Meuse the more he would be threatened by the advance of the German right wing.

If the German right wing continued to roll back the severely battered Allied forces, which were now steadily retreating, the effect upon the enemy's morale would be tremendous. Also, this movement would imperil the French center along the Meuse River. Its flank and then its rear threatened, the French center of General Foch's Ninth Army and General Langle's Fourth Army would be forced to begin an irregular southerly retreat.

There was a possibility of widening the already yawning gap in the French front and of entirely severing from the main body of the French forces the

Allies' left wing, now made up of General Lanrezac's Fifth French Army, the British army and General Maunoury's newly formed Sixth French Army.

Unfortunately the German supreme command did not follow this sound strategical plan. It meekly acquiesced when General von Hausen, instead of obeying orders to advance in a southwesterly direction, turned his Third Army eastward in support of the Duke of Würtemberg's Fourth Army. General von Hausen thereby utterly relinquished contact with the German right wing. Moltke and his aides were apparently permitting events to shape their own course. How differently his uncle, the great Moltke, would have handled the situation!

The second great mistake in German generalship, which ultimately led to the strategically negative result of the whole Marne campaign, was the separating of the German right wing from the mass. The reckless weakening of this right wing by diverting troops to remote and less important theaters of war had been the first fatal blunder.

The question arises as to what extent the leaders of the individual armies were responsible for the second blunder. It is only natural that a leader in the field whose army meets strong opposition along its entire front should appeal to his neighbors for assistance in attacking the enemy's flanks.

Whether the general plan of action is best served if the requested aid is given can hardly be decided by the local commander. His information regarding the general situation is necessarily limited. His neighbors must decide whether they are in a position to render the demanded assistance. And the supreme leader must make sure that there is no change in the development of operations as a whole.

General von Hausen was conscious of the fact that, in going with his Third Army to the aid of the Fourth Army of the Duke of Würtemberg, he was ignoring the *precise wording* of general orders issued by the supreme command on August 27. But he was nevertheless carrying out the *meaning* of these orders which had expressly stated that "all armies should cooperate and through mutual understanding support one another in engagements within individual sectors."

The general orders also stressed: "Strong resistance encountered on the Aisne, and subsequently on the Marne, may render necessary the turning of the armies from the southwest toward the south." It was only natural for General von Hausen to decide that this change in direction also applied if strong resistance were encountered along the Meuse River.

It was on the evening of August 29 that General von Hausen changed the direction of his advance to

the south. The supreme command, though continually informed of developments, did not interfere. The army leader was justified in assuming that his measures had official approval.

Meeting strong and unexpected resistance north of the Aisne River on the next day, General von Hausen appealed to the supreme command for directives. On the evening of August 30 he was instructed that his Third Army, cooperating closely with the Duke of Würtemberg's Fourth Army, was to continue pursuing the enemy toward the south and across the Aisne River. Thus, Moltke himself placed his official approval on the operations of General von Hausen, which resulted in his Third Army abandoning connections with the German right wing.

I maintain, regardless of the decisions made and orders issued by General von Hausen at this critical moment, that the responsibility for the German front breaking at the center (leaving a wide open breach) must be laid at the door of the supreme command.

If General von Hausen had steadily continued his advance toward Château-Thierry, as was originally ordered, he would have been able in good time to thrust the weight of the Third Army's flank right into the path of retreat of General Lanrezac's Fifth French Army. And one may well remain within the limits

of sober contemplation in saying that such a development, resulting in the smashing of General Lanrezac's army, would have decided the western campaign in favor of our arms.

Now let us examine the pursuit operations of the German right wing. After defeating the British at Le Cateau on August 26, General von Kluck's First Army endeavored, by forced marches, to reach the lower Somme in the general direction of Péronne. It had hardly succeeded in occupying the bridge-heads in this sector when, on August 29, it unexpectedly came in contact with Maunoury's Sixth French Army in process of organization around Amiens and along the Aire River. This threat from the side against the right flank of all the German armies was obviated by quick and decisive measures. Maunoury's Sixth French Army was forced to retreat before it was fully formed.

The Second German Army, under General von Bülow, was following on the left the First Army in echelon formation. Along the Oise River, east of Saint-Quentin, it was attacked by General Lanrezac's Fifth French Army. In the battle of Guise, lasting two days, General von Bülow showed consummate ability by preventing the thrust of the French forces. He then counter-attacked, hurling back the numer-

ically stronger enemy along the whole front from La Fère to Laon.

On the evening of August 30, at General von Bülow's request, General von Kluck turned his army southeastward toward the Oise River. He was intent on overtaking the flank of his opponent to block his retreat. The encirclement of the enemy's mass, which had not been achieved at Mons and Le Cateau, was now to be accomplished by strenuous forced marches.

The subsequent crossing of the Oise by General von Kluck's First Army and the ensuing pursuit operations to the southeast in the direction of Soissons should not be regarded as the reason for the unfavorable developments along the front as a whole. If the supreme command had believed this maneuver of General von Kluck to be dangerous, it could at any time have saved it.

In fact, a careful study of documents in the imperial archives shows that the supreme command on the evening of August 30, while still uninformed as to the intentions of General von Kluck, had already decided to shift southward the direction of the three pursuing armies of the German right wing.

The supreme command not only ordered General von Hausen's Third Army to continue its pursuit of

the enemy toward the south in close tactical cooperation with the Duke of Würtemberg's Fourth Army, but it also ordered General von Kluck's First Army and General von Bülow's Second Army to move in the same direction, so as to close up the gap in the German front.

Both General von Bülow and General von Kluck were directed to cooperate closely with General von Hausen. The left wing of General von Bülow's Second Army was to proceed in the direction of Rheims. The center of gravity of operations was thus shifted toward the south end and to the center of the German front.

There now took place one of the many inexplicable phenomena which make the psychology of the supreme command so incomprehensible. General von Moltke in Luxemburg—130 miles from the vital battle-point—became convinced that a tremendous battle was in progress along the fronts of the Third, Fourth and Fifth German armies.

This battle, he believed, had begun with counter-attacks of the French between the Meuse and the Moselle rivers, and appeared to expand to the west, along the southern bank of the Aisne. He, thereupon, apparently jumped to the conclusion that the enemy was numerically stronger, without having re-

ceived the slightest intimation to this effect from the various army commanders. Once completely imbued with this belief of German numerical inferiority, his first exaggerated optimism gave way to an equally exaggerated pessimism.

The chief of the imperial staff now called upon the left wing of General von Bülow's Second Army to enter into the battle south of the Aisne—a battle which existed only in his imagination! This phantom battle, not reality, determined his strategy.

Actually, on September 1, neither General von Hausen's Third Army nor the Duke of Würtemberg's Fourth Army was engaged any longer in heavy fighting. Both armies were occupied with a successful pursuit of the enemy.

Anybody reviewing today the conditions in both camps on September 1 will agree that the situation on September 1 called for the halt of the entire German front along the Aisne River for the purpose of introducing new strategical measures.

General von Moltke could not bring himself to this decision. In that narrow schoolroom in Luxemburg where he made his headquarters, destined to achieve such sad fame, he hesitated and wavered, wrestling with his own irresolution. When he finally issued an order it was usually the wrong one. On

the other hand, there was generally some strategic reason, sound in itself, to justify his decision. One should, therefore, be careful not to dismiss his reasons too lightly.

Foremost among the reasons for not stopping at the Aisne was that it would mean renouncing the initiative, which up to that time was successfully maintained. It is of inestimable value in battle to retain the initiative.

It is not true that Joffre embarked *voluntarily* and according to an *inspired plan* upon the retreat from the Sambre to the Meuse and then beyond the Marne. Joffre did not possess full freedom of action. He suffered to a great extent from the strategical compulsion of his pursuers.

At the very moment when the victorious pursuit of a fleeing enemy stops, the victor must be ready to accept the possibility that the enemy, once more master of his own decisions, may create an entirely new and surprising situation. Developments may ensue which make it impossible to exploit or even to maintain results already achieved.

The renunciation of the initiative, however, cannot lead to a more difficult situation than exists at the opening of hostilities, when everything is shrouded in a fog of uncertainty.

I am of the opinion, therefore, that in the course of warfare, a temporary and conscious renunciation of the initiative is in order, as soon as the leader realizes that the execution of his plans is not going to lead to the desired ultimate result, and might even lead to an unfavorable change in the general situation.

I do not believe that after the strategically abortive developments of the pursuit operations of the German armies up to September 1, there was still any certain chance of bringing about a speedy decision on the western front. The most important task of this moment was to maintain what had been gained thus far.

It appears to me that the wisest plan would have been to turn the five armies of the mobile German right and center back into the directions prescribed for them in the general orders of August 27. These directions were: General von Kluck's First Army—the lower Seine west of the Oise; General von Bülow's Second Army—the general direction of Paris; General von Hausen's Third Army—Château-Thierry; Duke of Würtemberg's Fourth Army—Epernay by way of Rheims; and my own Fifth Army—Châlons-sur-Marne and Vitry-le-François, after circling Verdun to the northwest.

It would have devolved upon General von Kluck's

First Army to cover the fortification of Paris whence the enemy was likely to launch a forceful counter-attack. Whether it would still have been possible to encircle the enemy's western wing is doubtful. This plan, however, would have left the Germans in possession of northern France as far as the lower Somme. Serious preparations for taking the Channel ports could then have been developed. The whole German west front would have been in an incomparably better position than was the case at the end of the Marne campaign.

On the evening of September 2, General von Moltke issued the following order to Generals von Kluck and von Bülow:

"The intention of the supreme command is to cut off the French from Paris to the southwest. The First Army will follow the Second in echelons and will insure the protection of the flank of all the armies."

In regard to the appellation "French," it may be assumed that General von Moltke referred exclusively to the French mass, and not to those isolated parts of Maunoury's Sixth French Army, which were spread out eccentrically along the Allies' utmost western wing. Maunoury's army along with the British apparently had succeeded by uninterrupted retreat in

completely extricating itself from the German pursuit. It is difficult to conceive how General von Moltke could really hope to exert a pressure strong enough to force the west wing of the French mass southeastward from Paris with General von Bülow's Second Army alone advancing against the Marne. To push the mass of the French to the southeast of Paris, General von Kluck's First Army would have to be drawn upon for decisive cooperation. But it could not give this cooperation if following the Second Army in echelon formation, as instructed in the supreme command's orders of September 2. The supreme command's ignorance of the real situation is again demonstrated here by the fact that the Second Army, which the First was to follow in echelon formation, was at this time a day's march behind the First Army. Also the First Army, in spite of forced marches, had failed to overtake the enemy's left, retreating toward the south by way of Soissons. What chance, therefore, did the Second Army have of catching up with the enemy and engaging it in decisive combat?

The order of the supreme command created a very difficult situation for General von Kluck. His subordinate, General von Quast, commanding the Ninth Army Corps on the left wing of the First Army, was

quite independently pursuing the French in the direction of Château-Thierry when the supreme command's order arrived at First Army headquarters on the night of September 2. And on September 3 General von Quast, contrary to his orders, advanced beyond the Marne.

General von Kluck himself believed that the intention of forcing the French from Paris in a southeasterly direction could still be realized. He, therefore, accepted General von Quast's program as his own, and permitted his Third and Fourth army corps to cross the Marne to cooperate with Von Quast. In this he definitely disobeyed an order issued to him by his superior command.

General von Kluck has been severely criticized for his disobedience. Reading, however, in the documents of the imperial archives how he arrived at his decision, one can appreciate his point of view.

General von Kluck was insufficiently informed regarding the situation as a whole. He did not know that the French behind their front were effecting important regroupings and were entraining strong forces for Paris from the French right wing more than one hundred miles to the east.

Possibilities of success beckoned to him beyond the Marne. According to reports received, it did not

seem unreasonable to believe that it was still possible to exert the intended pressure on the left flank of the enemy's west wing, now retreating toward the south across the Marne.

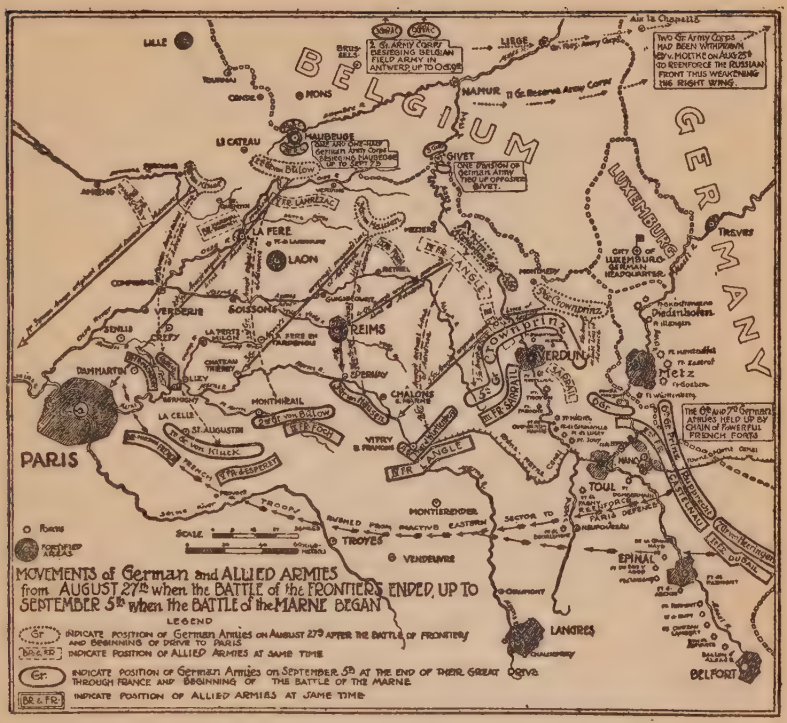
When members of Von Kluck's staff warned him of the possible attack on his flank from the direction of Paris, he replied: "The specter of Paris does not frighten me so long as it fails to materialize in flesh and blood!"

The official publications of the imperial archives direct attention to the fact that a number of reports from reconnoitering fliers, according to which enemy forces approximating two and one-half army corps and one and one-half cavalry divisions were concentrated northeast of Paris, failed to reach the commander of the First German Army.

This probably explains why General von Kluck on September 5 permitted his Second Army Corps also to cross the Marne toward the south. This left only the weak Fourth Reserve Corps and one division of cavalry on the north side of the river to defend the whole German flank and rear.

How did the supreme command react to the operations of General von Kluck's First Army, which were in contradiction to orders?

Communications between the supreme command


BELGIUM
GERMANY
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PARIS
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SOISSONS
REIMS
VERDUN
METZ
TREVES
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VITRY
TOUL
EPINAL
LANGRES
BELFORT
TROYES
MONTMIRAIL
MONTIERENDER
VENDEUVRE
DAMMARTIN
LA CELLE
ST. AUGUSTIN
Kluck
Bülow
Hausen
Duke of Wurtemberg
Crown Prince
Crown Prince of Bavaria
Duke of Lorraine
Duke of Würtemberg
Duke of Bavaria
Duke of Lorraine
Duke of Würtemberg
Duke of Bavaria
Duke of Würtemberg
Duke of Lorraine

On September 3, however, the supreme command had been informed of General von Kluck's decision to advance with two army corps in the hope of catching up, north of the Marne, with the enemy retreating before General von Bülow's Second Army. Moltke accepted this surprising development without raising any objection, although it was definitely contrary to his order: "The First Army will follow the Second Army in echelons. . . ."

A wireless message sent on the night of September 3 from General von Kluck at First Army headquarters to the Second and Third armies was picked up at Luxemburg. This carried the startling information that during September 3, the left wing of the First Army had crossed the Marne at Château-Thierry. But even now Moltke did not interfere. This proves that, as far as the German right wing was concerned, the supreme command not only "gave the horse his head," but allowed the reins to slip entirely out of its hands.

There is hardly any doubt that on September 5, General von Kluck would have stopped pursuing the enemy south of the Marne with his First Army—a procedure which eventually led to tragic results—if on the morning of September 4 the supreme command had issued a clear and unequivocal order, in-

structing him to assume immediately the position with his First Army which had been assigned to him in the order of September 2. That is: "The First Army should follow on the right of the Second Army in echelons."

The supreme command, therefore, cannot be exonerated from blame for developments on the right wing. To my mind, the guilt of the supreme command surpasses that of General von Kluck. Moltke was in receipt of messages from headquarters of the Third, Fourth and Fifth armies, stating that the enemy was withdrawing units facing them and entraining these units for other parts of the front.

I have already mentioned that General von Kluck was not aware of this. Now, what could seem more obvious than that these forces were being transported to Paris to be employed against the right German flank? This danger had been worrying Moltke since September 2. But it was after 7 o'clock on the evening of September 4 that the order was issued to General von Kluck to remain with his First Army in the sector between the Oise and the Marne facing the front east of Paris.

Here I might say that the sector between the Oise and the Marne is not east of Paris, as the supreme command's order states. It is north and northeast. It

was not possible for General von Kluck's First Army to remain in this sector which it had already left with the major portion of its troops. It could only march back to it.

On September 5, the enemy began his attack. The Fourth Corps of Reserves of the First Army, lone guard of the German right flank north of the Marne, met with a force of superior strength near Daumartin and retreated behind the Therouanne River. The tremendous and fateful battle for the decision in the western theater of war had begun!

"A commander's decisions must be guided not by the hope of *not* being beaten, but by the burning desire to vanquish the enemy."

This famous maxim of the great Count Schlieffen, the man who preceded General von Moltke as chief of the imperial general staff, was totally ignored by the German supreme command in the battle of the Marne.

It was *fear* of the German armies in Poland being defeated that had led General von Moltke first to weaken the all-important German right wing armies on the western front. Two army corps from General von Kluck's First Army and General von Bülow's Second Army had been dispatched to the eastern front to fight the advancing Russians.

Now, on September 5, on the eve of the fateful battle of the Marne, the *fear* of English troops landing in Antwerp and Ostend and threatening the German rear led General von Moltke to take two army corps and one division of cavalry from the Sixth and Seventh German armies in Lorraine and send them to Belgium.

If these troops had been sent to support the First Army of General von Kluck, or had been used to reinforce the German thrust south of Verdun—the two vital points—the 1914 campaign on the western front might have had a wholly different ending. The whole course of the war would have been changed.

General von Moltke was at this stage of the campaign under the hypnotic spell of Lieutenant-Colonel Hentsch, a man who, apparently, took counsel only of his fears. It was he who later, as the emissary of the supreme command to the various army commanders, ordered the German retreat which definitely ended all hopes of quick success for our arms on the western front.

Under Colonel Hentsch's pessimistic influence, General von Moltke sensed serious troubles in Belgium. The dangers—the landing of English troops in Antwerp and Ostend and the concentration of fighting units of the enemy near Lille—which he

now proceeded to offset by dispatching troops northward—really existed only in his imagination.

A few days previously, Field Marshal von der Goltz, Governor-General of Belgium, and a man of sober judgment, had informed the supreme command that there was no reason at the moment to expect a thrust of the Anglo-Belgian forces against our lines of communications.

But even the assurances of Von der Goltz could not still the fears of the chief of the imperial staff, who now sensed disaster on all sides. The specter of defeat appeared to General von Moltke even in those areas where developments were entirely satisfactory and wholly favorable.

Let us now examine the tactical situation of the German armies on the eve of the battle of the Marne.

On September 5, the supreme command admitted in a general directive, sent to all the armies, that it was no longer possible to cut off the French from Paris and to force them in a southeasterly direction against the Swiss frontier, as planned in its order of September 2.

It was known that the enemy, in order to protect his capital and at the same time to threaten the right German flank, had begun to concentrate large masses of troops in the neighborhood of Paris.

General von Kluck's First Army and General von

Bülow's Second Army therefore were ordered to counteract any attack from Paris by starting a broad and intense offensive movement in that direction. The supreme command, however, still endeavored somewhat to adhere to the program of "continually forcing the opponent toward the southeast." The Duke of Würtemberg's Fourth Army and my own Fifth Army were chosen as the main instruments used in this design, and we were ordered to continue our advance as originally prescribed.

The supreme command reserved decision regarding General von Hausen's Third Army. For the moment it was to advance southward from the Marne toward Troyes and Vendeuvre. According to later developments of the general situation, it would either go westward to the support of the right wing armies of General von Kluck and General von Bülow, or it would join in the engagements of the German left wing towards the south and southeast. This attempt to try to master with insufficient forces two utterly different tasks—the defeat of those Allied armies before Paris and at the same time planning to push the bulk of the French forces toward the Swiss frontier—was wholly unjustifiable. It was typical of the policy of stopgaps to which the supreme command had now been reduced.

General von Moltke, according to the memoirs of

Secretary of State Helfferich, was at this time thoroughly depressed. At his headquarters in far-off Luxemburg he kept saying to his staff:

"Don't let us fool ourselves. We have had successes, but we have not yet achieved victory. Victory means destroying the enemy's power of resistance. When armies of millions face each other, the victor ought to have prisoners. Where are our prisoners? Also, the small number of guns we have taken proves to me that the French have retreated in good order and according to plans. The worst is yet to come!"

This shows a clear enough conception of the actual situation. What, therefore, made General von Moltke stick to his original program of offensive operations? The only possible answer is fear of losing the initiative.

I maintain that on September 5, as on September 1, renouncing the initiative was a lesser evil than continuing the strategically abortive pursuit operations. Even at the earlier date there was no longer any certain chance of bringing about a speedy decision on the western front.

I have already shown that the most important task on September 1 was to maintain what had been gained thus far. On September 5 this was even more urgently the case.

The battle of the Marne began with the attack of General Maunoury's Sixth French Army on the Fourth German Reserve Corps of General von Kluck's First Army. This lone army corps and one cavalry division were the only troops left north of the Marne to guard the right flank of all the German armies when General von Kluck, with the bulk of his forces, vainly endeavored to catch up with the retreating left wing of the Allies south of the Marne.

It soon became evident that north of the Marne a battle of tremendous dimensions was in progress. The First German Army found itself in an extremely difficult situation. North of the Marne its right flank was in grave danger of being turned, and south of the Marne it had failed to engage in decisive combat the enemy which it had so relentlessly pursued.

There is no better means of judging the abilities of a general than to observe the dexterity with which he straightens out a situation arising from an operation that has well nigh miscarried. General von Kluck was now faced with such a situation. He proved his worth in a brilliant manner.

When General von Gronau, commanding the Fourth German Reserve Corps, received the information that the enemy was marching against his right flank, he was completely in the dark as to his opponent's strength and intentions.

There were no fliers at his disposal. Imbued, however, with the maxims of the old Prussian spirit of offense, he knew that the best means of tearing away the veil enshrouding all movements of the enemy northeast of Paris was for him to attack.

This decision of General von Gronau has repeatedly been compared to that of General von Alvensleben preceding the battle of Vionville in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870—a battle in which 67,000 Germans faced 130,000 French.

I, myself, feel that General von Gronau's intrepidity ranks higher than that of General von Alvensleben. The latter had some information in reference to the enemy, and ordered his troops to attack, thinking he was merely facing strong rear-guards. General von Gronau, however, was groping wholly in the dark, while thoroughly aware that he might hit upon a far stronger antagonist.

General von Gronau, having by his boldness discovered the strength of the enemy's attack, withdrew his troops behind the Therouanne River. Here he was joined by General von Linsingen's Second Army Corps, part of the First Army which had come from south of the Marne. On September 7 the Third and Ninth army corps of the First Army, which had been cooperating with General von Bülow's Second Army

south of the Marne, were also ordered north. They were to assist General von Gronau and General von Linsingen in bringing about a decision in the battle against General Maunoury's Sixth French Army along the Ourcq River.

This maneuver naturally exposed General von Bülow's right wing to the danger of tactical encirclement. It also widened still more the already yawning gap between the First and Second German armies, and increased the possibility of the enemy breaking through this part of the front.

General von Kluck appears to have recklessly exposed his neighbor General von Bülow to disaster. But it must be remembered that General von Kluck was in a situation where no half-measures would serve. A compromise was out of the question. He was intent upon turning the left wing of General Maunoury's Sixth French Army. To achieve this end he needed all his forces north of the Marne. He was compelled to risk the danger of having the German front broken through.

This radical solution of a dangerous situation is conclusive proof that General von Kluck possessed a great and embracing talent for leadership. He was not intimidated by uncertainties, but manifested a firm will to force a definite decision.

Encircling the enemy will, or at least should, lead to such a decision. Breaking through a front, on the other hand, is merely preparation for a more decisive maneuver. If the front is broken in the course of an encircling operation the ease with which the break can be mended is in direct proportion to the success of the encirclement. To exploit fully breaking-through operations strong forces and much time are required.

This, of course, is merely military theory. But General von Kluck was fully justified in applying this theory to his problem, because, as subsequently proved, it was possible for inferior forces, if managed with dexterity, to hold the naturally strong Marne sector, where the gap existed between his own left wing and General von Bülow's right wing. Here the thin line of General von Marwitz's cavalry was facing the British, and from experience thus far it was not to be expected that the British would act quickly and boldly to exploit their numerical superiority.

The threatened break through the German front by the English was successfully warded off. General von Kluck's First Army, by the incomparable feat of an encircling movement on the decisive northern wing near Nanteuil, had achieved a complete tactical

victory over General Maunoury's Sixth French Army. This was the well-deserved reward for holding unshakingly to a plan, the moral grandeur of which marks its originator as a born leader in the field.

The leaders of the First Army survived trials which, from a psychological point of view, could not have been more strenuous. Great admiration is also due to General von Kluck's soldiers, whose valiant spirit and readiness for self-sacrifice made it possible for their commander to aspire to so much and actually achieve it. Their losses were terrific, as shown by the official figures. The German troops never flinched.

All criticism is silenced before the evidence of facts. General von Kluck and his First Army persisted along the Marne until the very moment on September 9 when the supreme command ordered a retreat.

When General von Kluck's First Army was fighting so successfully to the northeast of Paris, I, with my Fifth Army, was endeavoring to break through the French front between the Rhine-Marne Canal and Aire. In this maneuver I requested the cooperation of the left wing of the Duke of Würtemberg's Fourth Army. Duke Albrecht, however, was concentrating all his forces on his right wing for an encircling movement along the Marne southeast of Vitry-le-François.

It looked as if my right flank was being jeopardized by the duke's maneuver, so I appealed to the supreme command for a decision. Its reply was "mutual understanding between the Fourth and Fifth armies in the course of battles seems advisable." This, of course, was no decision at all. I cite it to show that the smoothening hand of the supreme command was missing, even where adequate telephonic connections existed.

General von Hausen's Third Army was now finding itself in a very disagreeable position. This army, never too strong in fighting units because of constantly weakening itself to the benefit of both its right and left neighbors, had finally been forced to split in two. The supreme command's habit of allowing things to go any way the individual commanders of five German armies or fate willed was responsible for this unfavorable development.

The credit for the Third Army rendering essential assistance during the successful combats of the left wing of General von Bülow's Second Army against General Foch's Ninth French Army belongs to General von Hausen, commanding the Third Army, and not to the supreme command.

On September 9, when the supreme command ordered the retreat, the chances of the left wing of Gen-

eral von Bülow's Second Army, assisted by units of the Third Army, gaining a complete tactical victory over the French at La Fère-Champenoise were excellent. Behind the battered units of General Foch's Ninth Army there were no reserves, and if the attack, halted by the order to retreat, had continued, there would have been splendid chances of its growing into an encircling operation.

What were the events which brought about the fateful retreat—the retreat which not merely checked General von Bülow's left wing in its triumphant attack against General Foch's Ninth French Army, but also checked General von Kluck in his victorious turning of General Maunoury's Sixth French Army?

On the evening of September 7 the kaiser, as supreme war lord, gave General von Moltke certain explicit directives. He commanded:

"Attack as long as possible! Do not retreat one step under any circumstances!"

The kaiser, by starting out for Châlons—unfortunately he abandoned the trip before arriving at his destination—had intimated to the chief of his general staff where he really belonged at this moment. But all in vain! General von Moltke remained closeted in the little red brick school in Luxemburg.

Looking back today, it seems doubtful whether

Moltke, broken by the pressure of fate, would have been of more value in Châlons than in Luxemburg, where spiritual bankruptcy overtook him. He entirely abandoned his responsibilities as the master mind of his armies, although as a soldier he was perfectly willing to lay down his life. He reminds one of General Benedek, supreme commander of the Austrian forces in the war against Italy in 1866.

It was only on the morning of September 8 that General von Moltke, persisting in his self-imposed retirement from the active direction of his armies, did finally summon up enough energy to dispatch Lieutenant-Colonel Hentsch to the headquarters of General von Kluck's First Army and General von Bülow's Second Army.

Certain points regarding this fateful mission of Lieutenant-Colonel Hentsch will probably never be sufficiently explained. Regarding the actual purpose of his errand, the explanations of Moltke, Hentsch and Colonels Tappen and von Dommes vary decidedly. These were the four men who participated in the conference which decided upon the mission. Colonels Tappen and von Dommes insist that Hentsch was instructed "to see to it that the armies did not retreat."

This, of course, was entirely in agreement with the

kaiser's order of September 7. It was only if parts of the right wing had already started to retreat that Hentsch, according to Tappen and Dommes, was "to attempt to direct these movements in such a way that the gap between the inner wings of the First and Second armies would be bridged in the direction of Fismes." Moltke, himself, protested on numerous occasions that he never gave Hentsch an order for the retreat of the First and Second armies.

According to Moltke's written statements, Hentsch was merely instructed "to inform the First Army that in case a retreat became necessary it should be executed along the line Soissons-Fismes, so the First Army could again join up with the Second Army." It is still an open question whether such an order gave Hentsch the power to decide as to the necessity of the First Army retreating.

Hentsch's own reports are full of contradictions. He insists that he was authorized "to order in case of necessity a retreating movement of the entire German front—the First to the Fifth armies inclusive—to a line behind the Vesle River and the hills forming the northern border of the Argonne."

In view of these contradictions, it seems probable that each of those present at the conference put an individual interpretation on instructions which were

The situation on the western front at the climax of the Battle of th
in September, 1914, at the time General von Moltke ordered the
forces to retreat and the Allied forces under Marshal Joffre pressed
to the victory that saved Paris and wrecked the German plan of c

BELGIUM
LUXEMBURG
GERMANY
Treves
Mosel R.
SEDAN
Meuse R.
STENAY
CITY OF LUXEMBURG
GERMAN HEADQUARTERS
Aisne R.
VOUZIERS
GRAND PRE
APREMONT
BINAR-VILLE
Aire R.
SOUAM
VARENNES
SUIPPES
ST. MENE-HOULD
LA NEUVILLE
HALONS
MARNE
Marne R.
REVIGNY
4th Army of Württemberg
4th Gr. Wurt. of Württemberg
LANGLE
Crown Prince
FT. DOUAUMONT
FT. VAUX
VERDUN
FT. ROZELLIER
FT. TROYON
5th Gr.
5th Gr.
6th Gr.
6th Gr.
6th Gr.
Meuse R.
FT. PAROCHE
FT. ST. MICHEL
FT. du CAMP des ROMAINES
FT. de GIRONVILLE
FT. de LUCEY
FT. JOUY
FT. de ECRUYS
III. FR. SARRAIL
II. FR.
II. FR.
FT. Guentrangeno
Diedenhofen
FT. Illangen
FT. Manteuffel
FT. Zastrof
Metz
FT. Goeben
FT. Württenberg
NANCY
CASTELNAU
Gr. v. Bayern Rupprecht
RHINE-MARNE-CANAL
RHINE-MARNE-CANAL
BAR LE DUC
ST. DIZIER
TOUL
FT. DOMGER-MAIN
FT. de PAGNY
Ornain R.
Meuse R.
Mosel R.
MONTIERENDER
BRIENNE
Marne R.
NEUF CHÂTEAU
Gr. v. Heeringen
1st FR. DUBAIL
1st FR. DUBAIL
DE LA GRANDE HAYE
EPINAL
FT. DU BOIS L'ABBE
FT. d'UXEGNEY
FT. de RATIMONT
FT. d. ARCHES
FT. PARMONT
FT. d. RUPT
FT. CHATEAU LAMBERT
BON de SERVANCE
BALLON d' ALSACE
BELFORT
LANGRES
914.

none too clearly defined and which were not reduced to writing.

Hentsch's conviction that at least a retreat of the right wing could not be avoided was in full accord with Moltke's pessimism. He started on his mission imbued with the preconceived idea of the necessity for a retreat. It was impossible for him to adapt himself to the situation as he found it at First and Second Army headquarters—a situation radically different from the conception which he had arrived at through mathematical deduction while far removed from the actual field of battle.

The conversation between Hentsch and General von Bülow on the evening of September 8 at Castle Montmort should have made it plain to Hentsch that his conception of the situation was not borne out by reality. General von Bülow seriously remonstrated when Hentsch suggested "a voluntary and timely retreat." The leader of the Second Army pointed out that his troops were not at all in an unfavorable situation. General von Bülow and Hentsch, however, did agree that the situation of General von Kluck's First Army was untenable, as its flank and rear were jeopardized from the direction of the Marne. They also agreed that the First Army should immediately retreat.

General von Bülow thought it possible for Von Kluck's First Army to regain contact with and the support of Von Bülow's army forces by merely moving back to a line running from La Ferté-Milo to Château-Thierry. Hentsch could not be convinced that this was possible.

He was certain that the reestablishment of connections between the two armies could only be achieved by a retreat of the inner wings of both armies in the direction of Fismes.

A compromise was finally reached. General von Bülow agreed to order the retreat of his Second Army if the enemy actually crossed the Marne with strong forces, thus threatening the rear of General von Kluck's First Army. This agreement was a victory for Hentsch. As long as no information came from the First Army to indicate that it was unable by its own sole power to cope with threats at its flank and rear, there was no reason, except Hentsch's pessimism, for the retreat of the Second Army.

The fact that General von Bülow agreed to order his Second Army to draw back without making any attempt to inform himself of the actual conditions of the First Army, and without waiting for a clarification of the whole situation, constitutes, to my mind, his part of the guilt in the fateful retreat.

An extenuating circumstance, however, is the fact that General von Bülow did not know that it was the intention of General von Kluck to bring about a decision of the battle by an attack on his extreme right. In the stress of events, communications between the First and Second armies did not function properly. This was regrettable but understandable.

This same extenuating circumstance does not apply to Hentsch. Through messages from First Army headquarters received at Luxemburg before he left, Hentsch was well informed of General von Kluck's intentions. He did not disclose this information to General von Bülow. On the contrary, he painted the situation of the First Army in very drab colors.

On the morning of September 9, Hentsch left for the headquarters of General von Kluck's First Army. It was later the same day that General von Bülow, informed of enemy forces pressing forward north of the Marne, ordered his army to retreat.

The decision of General von Bülow in this crisis will always remain a point for keen argument among military critics. The official publications record General von Bülow's thought to have been somewhat as follows:

"It was obviously the intention of the enemy to encircle the German right wing by first separating

General von Kluck's army from the mass and then annihilating it. This had to be prevented at any cost. The defeat or the retreat of the First Army seemed impossible to avoid. Either eventuality meant that the Second Army would be seriously endangered as its right flank would be left unprotected. The next few hours might bring this disaster. Something had to be done quickly.

"As the First Army must retreat, the Second Army, in agreement with the compromise of the previous day, must also retreat. The Second Army must support the First Army north of the Marne and offer it a chance to connect with the Second Army's own right wing. With the assistance of the Seventh Army now approaching from Belgium, it would thus be possible to establish a new front along the Aisne River."

General von Bülow is not to be blamed if he looked upon the operations of General von Kluck's First Army as dangerous foolhardiness, which could only be prevented from developing into a complete catastrophe by the First Army's immediate retreat. He had not the slightest inkling that the First Army was not preparing a retreat, but was tenaciously holding the advanced position in the firm hope of a decisive victory almost at the gates of Paris.

Only a real genius of the battle-field, one of those

born leaders of remarkable gifts, would, in a case like this, have taken a very long chance and decided, come what may, simply to remain where he was. Perhaps General von Bülow, famous for his strong will, would have found strength for such a decision if he had not on the previous evening come under the influence of Hentsch's pessimism—his belief that Von Kluck must fail and retreat.

When Hentsch arrived at First Army headquarters, he found the situation far different from what he had pictured it in his conference with General von Bülow. But it was now too late to undo the damage he had wrought. The Second Army was already retreating. There was nothing for General von Kluck's First Army to do but retreat also. It was, however, impossible for the two armies to join at Fismes as intended in Hentsch's plan. The Aisne River would have to be the new point of consolidation.

The retreat of General von Bülow's Second Army also meant the compulsory retreat of General von Hausen's Third Army, which in turn compelled somewhat later the retreat of the Duke of Würtemberg's Fourth Army and my own Fifth Army.

It was on the morning of September 10 that Hentsch arrived at my headquarters and demanded that the Fifth Army withdraw to a line running ap-

proximately from Sainte Menehould to Clermont. I made short shrift of him. He embarked on his return trip to Luxemburg with the information that I would not recognize his demands without a written order from either the supreme war lord or the chief of the imperial general staff.

Hentsch, on arriving in Luxemburg, induced General von Moltke to undertake a trip to the headquarters of the Third, Fourth and Fifth armies. At the close of this trip of General von Moltke, his last journey as chief of the imperial general staff, he ordered a general retreat.

This was successfully executed, and on September 14 the German armies had consolidated their front from the Oise River to the Swiss frontier.

The German offensive on the west front had been wrecked. The success of the original plan for a war on two fronts, which depended upon a quick and thorough decision in the west, was no longer possible. The Miracle of the Marne had saved France, and with France, her Allies.

MARSHAL FOCH'S

Narrative of the winning of the war, as told by Bernard Désouches, official liaison officer between the French Army and the American Air Service in France.

Revised by Major de Mierry, Marshal Foch's staff officer.

III

NAPOLEON once said: "One bad general is better than two good ones." And Machiavelli, an astute student of the science of war as well as of the art of politics, was fond of this maxim: "Let only one command in war, for several minds weaken an army."

It took the Allies nearly four years to achieve unity of command on the western front, which ran through Belgium and France, from the North Sea to the Alps. At one time, on this long line, the main theater of the Great War, there were as many as five separate armies, under five flags—armies speaking different languages—each absolutely independent of the other, but all battling against one enemy.

The Belgians in Flanders, the British along the Somme, the French in Champagne, the Americans in the Vosges, and the Italians in the Alps—all were masters of their own destinies. But there was no master of the military destiny of the Allies as a whole. And for the long lack of such a master the war was unduly prolonged and the Allied cause repeatedly threatened with defeat.

When, in the spring of 1918, the higher command was finally created and the Allied armies faced the Germans as a single unit, the war was won. The end was only a matter of time. The armies of the kaiser had to surrender or be crumpled by the great hosts of democracy fighting as one great army.

It is required, now, to tell briefly why this necessary step of appointing one supreme commander for all the Allied armies was not, and could not be, taken earlier. The whole question of a higher command was not discussed by the Allies at the beginning of the war. Nor could it have been discussed. We must remember the instructions which the British minister of war, Lord Kitchener, gave to Field Marshal Sir John French, at the time he assumed command of the British forces in France. These instructions were:

"I should like you to know that your command is completely independent, and that in no case will you be placed under the orders of an Allied general."

One could not be clearer in the repudiation of the single command. Extremely regrettable consequences ensued.

After the first unfortunate battles in Belgium and northern France, Marshal French, availing himself of his independence, manifested his intention of temporarily abandoning the struggle in order to reconsti-

tute his army in the rear. The intervention of the British government brought him to a more rightful conception of the requirements of the moment, and, as a matter of fact, he thereafter conformed to the plans of General Joffre.

The victory of the Marne effaced the bad recollections of the war's beginnings, but it did not provide for the direction of operations as a whole.

In October, 1914, immediately following the battle of the Marne, the struggle shifted to Flanders. Two English and four French army corps, as well as the Belgian army, fallen back from Antwerp, were engaged here. It would have been advisable to place them all under a single commander.

But in the same way as Lord Kitchener forbade Marshal French to put his forces under an Allied general, so the Belgian Constitution forbade the placing of Belgian troops under the orders of a foreign commander.

General Joffre, when commander-in-chief of the French armies, had delegated me to Flanders in order to promote coordination and cooperation. I had no title conferring on me rights to an interallied command. If it devolved upon me to play an important part in the battles of Yser and Ypres, I owe it solely to the confidence and good-will of the King of the

Belgians and Marshal French, and to the authority they granted me in their councils.

The Belgian army, despite its enormous losses and profound exhaustion, was maintained on the Yser, and the British army, side by side with the French armies, successfully defended Ypres against fierce assaults. But the utmost efforts of the enemy for many months failed to break the implacable union of the French-Belgian-British forces. This illuminating experience did not, however, bring about a permanent higher command for the Allies. Nearly four years of painful experience were required to do that!

At the end of 1914, the Germans, compelled to cope with the Russian peril, decided to dig themselves in in northern France and Flanders to hold the front as in a vise, without attempting a general offensive. They sheltered themselves behind powerful defenses built along the whole front from the North Sea to Switzerland, hundreds of miles.

In 1915, the Allies vainly tried their strength against that German wall of men behind ramparts of earth, concrete and steel. The giant cuirass would not give way before the best weapons used in any war. It was necessary to construct new weapons, more numerous, more modern, and more formidable. This required several months.

In 1916, a new and redoubtable instrument for assault—the tank—was devised. And this year the Franco-British offensive on the Somme won notable successes that were not, however, decisive. These successes might have been increased to definite battle-victories with permanent results, had a unified command been at work to insure on all occasions a suitable rhythm and objective in the operations of the British and French armies.

For lack of a permanent general direction it was necessary to come to understandings during the heat of action with all grades of commanders. These understandings often took a long time to arrive at, when time was a vital factor in the success of the operation. A sporadic victory in an isolated battle, even with confusion and rout of the enemy in one sector of a 120-mile battle front, had no permanent result unless there was such coordination of the forces as to extend and consolidate the victory.

Anyone who studies the offensive on the Somme in 1916 must come to the conclusion that the Franco-British attacks obtained important results only when jointly conducted and always *did* when the operations were unified and directed on a broad front. On the other hand, whenever the attacks were isolated or executed without a plan that comprehended and in-

cluded the whole battle front they resulted either in failure or small gains not worth the grave losses incurred.

The French general headquarters organized inter-allied conferences, and these were attended by the different commanders-in-chief or their representatives. But however useful these meetings may have been, they could not possibly replace the sole command, indispensable upon the actual battle-field for the conduct of a war.

Toward the end of 1916, as the number of Allies increased and their battle equipment improved, a still greater need of a single command became manifest.

The idea of a higher command was making headway, but its application still seemed so difficult that its most convinced partisans hardly dared openly to urge it.

The honor of daring to do so belongs to Lloyd George. On coming into power in England as prime minister he shook off all prejudice and silenced all scruples. He believed in the value of the single command, and he dared to say so and to act. The trusted military and civil personal representatives whom he sent to France were imbued with his courage and expressed his conviction.

At a Franco-British conference called by Lloyd

George in Calais on February 26 and 27, 1917, it was decided that for the operations in the spring of 1917 the British armies commanded by General Haig would be subject to the orders of General Nivelle, the new French commander-in-chief. That was the first step! It was taken at a great moment in the war. The United States had dismissed the German ambassador and was preparing to declare war upon the imperial German government. Germany was even then beginning to transfer troops from the Russian front to France to make a supreme effort to win the war on the western front before the Americans could enter it.

For the first time, after thirty months of indecisive warfare, the single command was *officially* instituted on the western front for two armies—the British and French.

The experiment, unfortunately, did not succeed.

It is impossible for me to give the precise reasons for this failure, as the situation in which I then found myself does not permit me to express any certain opinion on this subject. There has been talk of disagreements between the military chiefs. I know nothing about them. Rather, I believe, that the failure of our attacks in 1917 was responsible for the abrupt ending of the tentative scheme. The fail-

ure made the general situation still more critical; the possibility of any military victory great enough to end the war still more doubtful.

In the summer of 1917 the defection of Russia was so easy to foresee that at a meeting of the heads of the Allied governments held in Paris on July 25 the French commander-in-chief, General Petain, I, as chief of the general staff, and my British colleague General Robertson, all laid stress on the power which the German effort might develop in 1918 owing to Russia's abandonment of the war.

In order to cope with this coming danger, we, as the military commanders, proposed the creation of an interallied organization to prepare a plan for a more rapid movement and better coordination of troops on the western front. Our suggestion had little success. It was deemed to indicate pessimism. And somebody even stated that military men lacked imagination. The meeting finally broke up without anything having been decided.

Three months later, on October 24, 1917, the Germans and Austrians attacked in Italy. As early as the 26th French and British divisions, thanks to previous arrangements between general staffs, were transported beyond the Alps. On the 27th I myself left for Italian headquarters.

Because of the growing defeat, the heads of the French and British governments went to Italy and met the Italian government at Rapallo. On November 7 the three governments agreed to create a "higher council of war" composed of the French, British and Italian prime ministers, each assisted by a military representative.

The purpose of this higher council of war was the coordination of military action on the western European front and the supervision of the general conduct of the war. It was to hold meetings in Versailles.

Under pressure of events, another feeble step was thus taken.

Did it achieve any result? No! It did not fill the real requirement of the Allies' military organization. It had no power to act. The higher council of war was to supervise and coordinate. But it possessed no means of directing and still less of commanding.

Fortunately, the American, British, French and Italian generals composing the technical division of the higher council of war were all convinced of the absolute necessity for a single command, but their governments would not consent. Even Lloyd George had been persuaded, temporarily, to modify his previous view.

General Wilson, British representative, agitated

for it with equal ingenuity and perseverance. General Cadorna, Italian representative, although more conservative in his actions, likewise undertook its defense.

General Weygand, French representative, evinced his ardent conviction for it under all circumstances.

As for General Bliss, the American representative, ever since his arrival in France during November, 1917, he had openly agitated for a single military command. So fully persuaded was he as to the reasonableness and correctness of his belief on this all-important question that at one time he believed the United States should insist upon the Allies designating a commander-in-chief as a primary condition of the immense effort which America was then preparing to exert. He had so advised the American secretary of war and President Wilson.

The point of view of the military representatives at Versailles, however, was not shared by everyone. Marshal Haig, who had bad memories of his temporary subordination in 1917, maintained a prudent reserve. The imperial chief of staff, General Robertson, remained faithful to the principle of 1914—a separate British army, responsible only to its own commander-in-chief. He contended that in no case could the British commander-in-chief be placed under the orders of an Allied general.

The military conferences at Versailles nevertheless continued. They met, they conferred, they often agreed, but they were without power to act. At the end of January, 1918, they proposed to the various government heads the creation of "an Interallied General Military Reserve"—that is, a military force not under the exclusive control of any one of the Allies, but available in emergency to aid anyone hard pressed. If this proposal were adopted, it would be an important step toward the single command.

On February 2 the higher council of war accepted the military representatives' suggestion and definitely decided to form this reserve. An executive committee was appointed composed of the military representatives of the United States, France, Great Britain and Italy. This committee would determine the size and composition of the reserve, specify its location, arrange for its transportation and concentration— and finally, when the moment came, decide upon its use.

As president of the executive committee, I approached the various commanders-in-chief on February 6 regarding the constitution of the Interallied Reserve. I encountered no difficulties either at the French or Italian general headquarters. The British general headquarters, however, would not entertain the demands made upon them, and their refusal was

so categorical that I was forced to renounce the idea of organizing the reserve.

What would the heads of the governments do when faced with this situation? As incomprehensible as it may seem they abandoned their previous resolutions.

On March 14 and 15 a meeting of the higher council of war took place in London. The British prime minister, who had been informed of the threatened German attack on the British front, declared that he now approved Marshal Haig's unwillingness to forego any of his divisions to benefit the general reserve. The head of the British government not only brought the French premier over to his viewpoint, but also convinced him that it was equally impossible to detach any British unit from the French front to create such a reserve.

This was the final blow to the general reserve, the executive committee, and therefore to the single command of which the first two contained the germ.

The reason for the governments' sudden change of front was very simple. It was wholly attributable to a mutual arrangement which the British and French commanders-in-chief, Marshal Haig and General Petain, had just concluded. According to this arrangement, the two commanders promised each other reciprocal aid in case of attack.

If the attack developed on the British front the French army would send five divisions of infantry, four of cavalry and three regiments of artillery to the aid of the British.

Should the French front be attacked Marshal Haig would give General Petain the support of six to eight of his divisions, with an equal number of artillery units. This aid, however, was subject to the British front itself not being involved in a big German offensive.

It was on the strength of this agreement that the heads of the Allied governments had abandoned the idea of the general reserve controlled by an executive military committee.

"The two commanders-in-chief are agreed. What more do you want?" said one of them.

On close examination, however, the agreement was found to be too fragile and indefinite to be effective. Without considering the restriction with which the British side was burdened, one naturally feared that the agreement would immediately break down in the event of such an emergency as a sudden general attack, the result of which upon his own position and army neither general could confidently foresee.

In the presence of the brutal and unexpected reality of such a battle, would not each commander-in-chief

necessarily be concerned far more with the fate of his own armies, for which he was responsible to his own government, than with the perils of his neighbor? His sense of duty would restrain him. An individual may bravely and nobly sacrifice his own life to save another, but no general commanding an army can either bravely or nobly sacrifice that army to save another.

What is required in battle at the moment of grave decisions is the authority and power of a single commander to use instantly any part of his force for the benefit of the whole—even to sacrifice a part of his force to gain the victory. And the decision made by him must be executed unfalteringly by every corps and division commander.

On March 15, at London, I immediately called the attention of the heads of the government to the uneasiness which their decision to abandon the general reserve caused me. And I pointed out the great gap existing in the organization of the command of the Allied armies at a moment when one of the most serious battles of the war was apparently to begin.

Experience permitted me to make this criticism. Since the beginning of the war, numerous battles had been fought in which the different Allied armies had taken part.

The French and British had fought together in 1914 on the Marne and at Arras.

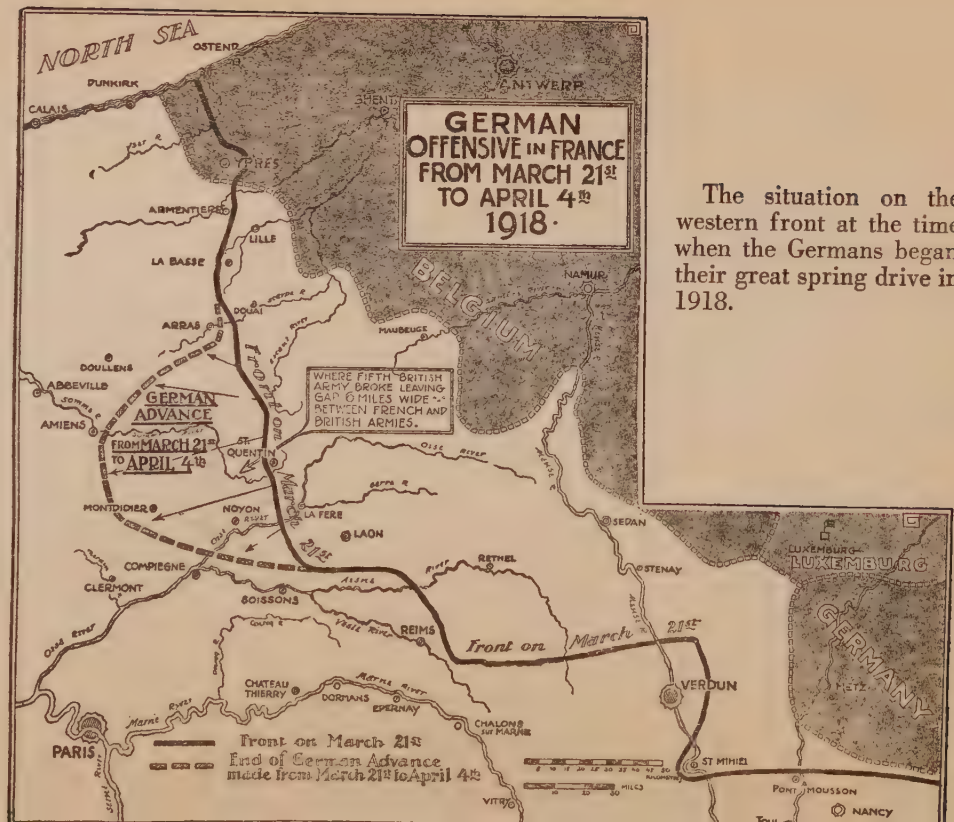
The French, British and Belgians had fought side by side on the Yser and at Ypres during the same year.

And in 1917 on the Piave, the Italians, British and French had offered a united front to the Austro-German hosts. None of these cooperative campaigns could have been successful in the smaller arenas if there had not been coordination and centralization of authority, and I believed that the same result would ensue under like conditions in the larger arena.

In the spring of 1918, this medium would have been the command of the Interallied General Reserve, if the Reserve had been constituted.

When the Interallied General Reserve was abandoned the Allied governments incurred heavy responsibilities. They put their confidence in a mere personal agreement between two chiefs each to help the other—an agreement to be carried out in the stress of battle, under circumstances that could not be foreseen, by each commander-in-chief. It was a compromise agreement and in military, as in other affairs, compromises do not often work. Events now proved the lack of wisdom in this arrangement.

On March 21, 1918, at four o'clock in the



The situation on the western front at the time when the Germans began their great spring drive in 1918.

morning, a deafening clash of thunder suddenly broke along the French front from Arras to Noyon. The German artillery was coming into action along a line sixty-five miles long.

The Central Powers were beginning the offensive that was to win the war. Because of the crumbling of the eastern front following the Russian Bolshevik revolution, Germany was able to concentrate all her forces in the west. With a great superiority of men, the German commanders were determined to destroy the Allied armies before the United States could throw enough men into France to give the Allies a numerical advantage.

For five hours the German artillery hammered our positions. It annihilated our defenses. It killed thousands of courageous defenders. It extended its deadly work for six miles behind the battle-line, poisoning the whole countryside with shells containing asphyxiating gases.

At nine o'clock, under cover of a dense fog, fifty divisions of the enemy, a half-million men, united in a concentrated ferocious attack upon the disordered Allied trenches.

The German soldiers were animated by the highest spirit and supreme confidence. The British and French armies were facing the most formidable onslaught of the whole war.

Before Arras, the Third British Army under General Byng stood firm. It did not flinch under the avalanche. But in the region of Saint-Quentin, south of Arras, the Fifth British Army under General Gough was completely routed. Retreating toward the Somme, it failed to reestablish itself on that river. Four days later this army found itself pushed back more than fifteen miles to the rear of its original lines.

Far graver than the loss of territory was the fact that General Gough's forces had lost all liaison with the French fighting on their right. There was an open gap of six miles between these two Allied armies. Through this opening the Germans could throw their army, permanently dividing the British and the French. The crisis was the most critical in the World War because if the Germans realized and took full advantage of the situation, they could defeat the northern section of the Allied armies, take the Channel ports, cut off reinforcements and win the war.

The French divisions, sent to the rescue, in compliance with an agreement made between the British and French commanders-in-chief, failed to reestablish the continuity of the front. Marshal Haig, commanding all the British forces, asked for further succor from General Petain, generalissimo of the French armies.

Petain was unable to grant General Haig's request. Champagne, the defense of which depended wholly upon the French, was also under terrific German attack, so that no troops could be diverted. In this area the soldiers of France guarded the road to Paris. Their numbers could not be reduced any further.

Here was a situation which the understanding between the two commanders-in-chief could not solve. The brutality and immensity of the recent developments had brought on a profound crisis—a crisis, which I must say was not unexpected by us of the general staff, but which, because of the lack of a higher command, we were unable to provide against.

Unless the breach was quickly filled, two separate battles would soon be fought—a French battle for the defense of Paris and central France, and a British battle for command of the Channel and control of the British bases. These battles would not be fought at the same time. Von Ludendorff would first engage one enemy and then the other. Against both he would possess an overwhelming superiority of means.

Such was the prospect before us. I was then chief of the general staff, and in that capacity a technical adviser of the French government and directly responsible to it.

Therefore, on the afternoon of March 24—it was Sunday and three days after the beginning of Germany's greatest offensive—I called upon Monsieur Clemenceau, premier and minister of war. I requested him to constitute without delay a "Directing Medium of the War."

I impressed upon Monsieur Clemenceau the absolute urgency of some authority that would give the necessary directions for the conduct of the battle as a whole and that also would be able to assure the execution of its plan. If such an authority were not created, I told the premier, the battle would be insufficiently prepared, inadequately conducted and improperly executed. The consequences would be the most serious conceivable. In the language of diplomacy, these were strong terms.

A few hours later, General Haig made a similar appeal to the British government. During the night of March 24-25 he cabled to the imperial chief of staff to come to France immediately "in order that a higher command for the whole western front might be appointed as soon as possible."

In the hour of danger the loyal soldier, such as General Haig, puts aside all prejudice and devotes himself to a single end—the welfare of the cause he represents.

Following General Haig's appeal, General H. Wilson, the new chief of the imperial general staff, hastened to France. He was at Abbéville on the 25th. Here he was met by Haig, who explained the situation to him.

Amiens, the vital center of communication between the British and French armies, was dangerously threatened since the Germans made the critical breach in the Allied front. It must be saved at any cost. But how? The British had no more reserves. All had been exhausted. Help could come only from the French. General Petain, however, still anxious about Champagne, would not consent to greatly reducing his forces.

Petain was willing to dispatch to the Somme ten divisions more than he had promised. But their transport would be slow, at the rate of only two divisions daily.

General Haig considered this French aid as totally inadequate. He frankly stated that the only way of meeting the ever increasingly dangerous situation was to appoint a supreme chief to take such immediate, energetic and even daring measures as were necessary to reestablish the front.

While this conversation between General Haig and General Wilson was going on at Abbéville, I was

present at an equally important conference at the French headquarters in Compiègne.

Here, besides myself, were gathered the President of the Republic, Monsieur Poincaré; Monsieur Clemenceau, General Petain, and Lord Milner, who was a member of the British war cabinet and had been sent to France by the prime minister, Lloyd George, as a special observer.

During this conference General Petain pointed out the profound disorganization of the Fifth British Army, and stated the measures taken by him to come to its aid. He had dispatched fifteen French divisions in its direction, five of which were already engaged. Later he hoped to send along others, but for the moment he could give no further aid. It was necessary for him always to be ready for a German attack on Paris by way of the valley of the Oise and Rheims.

I was questioned. I had nothing to say as to the policy of General Petain and the French general headquarters. But it did seem to me that the danger of the German offensive having for its object the making of a breach between the British and French armies in the direction of Amiens was such that it was necessary, if need be, to run certain risks elsewhere.

I was in favor of sending to the north of the Oise

the number of divisions required to reestablish the front. And I said that they should be sent rapidly, even if they must, therefore, be put into the battle in a not completely organized state.

My viewpoint seemed to secure the support of all those at the conference. In the absence of General Haig, however, it was difficult to make formal decisions. It was agreed thereupon that another meeting would be held the following day with the British generals.

Thus on the evening of March 25 the opinion prevailed in the British general staff, as I afterward learned, that the aid afforded the British by the French was insufficient, and that in order to increase it, as well as augment the speed with which it was given, a chief was required to take charge of the combined forces.

Who was the chief to be? There was further hesitation. Witness the proposition made to me at this time by Major-General Wilson. He suggested entrusting the direction of operations to Monsieur Clemenceau, whom I would serve as chief of staff. I easily demonstrated to General Wilson that this would be a solution which, instead of disposing of difficulties, would only increase them. He agreed with good grace.

Such was the situation when we again met on the following day at Doullens, a small quiet town about thirty kilometers north of Amiens.

The colorful saying of America's first ambassador to France, Benjamin Franklin, when earlier he was advising the American revolutionists, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately," epitomized the situation of the Allied armies on the west front before a commander-in-chief was appointed.

I have told how the lack of a unified control prolonged the war on the west front. The supreme effort of Germany to win the war before the legions of America could throw their full weight into the military balance was made only after the collapse of the Russian armies in their own revolution made it possible to concentrate nearly all the German strength in France. This compelled the governments of France, England, Italy and the United States to consent to put all their armies under a single commander-in-chief.

The circumstances leading up to this momentous decision I have already described.

The Germans had begun their great offensive on March 21 and the Fifth British Army under General Gough had broken, in the region of Saint-Quentin,

leaving the open gap of six miles between the British and the French.

The situation was critical. Taking advantage of this breach, the Germans were likely to start two new and vital offensives—to drive through the French towards the south on to Paris and to turn on the British towards the north for command of the Channel and the British bases.

It was with all this in mind that the historic gathering at Doullens was held.

Representing the French at this important conference were Monsieurs Poincaré, Clemenceau and Loucheur, General Petain, myself and my chief of staff, General Weygand. The British were represented by Lord Milner, General Wilson, General Haig and his chief of staff, General Lawrence.

When we arrived at the Town Hall, Sir Douglas Haig was meeting with his army commanders in the large hall where the conference was to be held. While waiting for the British commander and his generals to finish their consultation, we walked about in the neighboring garden and conversed. Anxiety was written on every face and expressed in many remarks.

I remember breaking somewhat sharply into the conversation on hearing someone express the idea that it might be wise to evacuate Paris.

"Paris!" I said, "Paris has nothing to do with it! Paris is a long way off! It is where we now stand that the enemy will be stopped. We have only to say, 'He shall not pass!' and he will not pass. I guarantee you that. Believe me, success is three-quarters achieved when we are convinced that we cannot fall back farther and the order is sent forth to resist where we stand at this very moment."

Haig having finally dismissed his lieutenants, we seated ourselves around the conference table at about 12:30 P. M. Monsieur Poincaré presided.

General Haig was the first to speak. He stated that he would stand firm before Arras and on the north of the Somme, but that he could do nothing on the south side of the river. All his troops were engaged. He could hope for scarcely any reinforcements from England. The safety of Amiens depended entirely upon help from the French.

General Petain, questioned in turn, stated the measures he had taken to protect Amiens. He had ordered additional French divisions to the Somme, so that the number now totaled twenty-four. Their transportation, however, necessitated rather long delays and their action could not be expected to make itself felt for some days.

After these exposés Lord Milner rose, and, taking

Monsieur Clemenceau aside, suggested that the governments entrust the general conduct of operations to myself.

Monsieur Clemenceau was of the same opinion, and he and Lord Milner readily obtained the consent of Generals Haig and Petain, both of whom were possessed by the same spirit of self-abnegation. A paper was immediately drawn up recording the agreement that had just been reached. By virtue of this agreement, known to history as the Agreement of Doullens, I was commissioned by the British and French governments "to coordinate the action of the Allied armies on the western front."

It was about half past two in the afternoon when the document, signed by Lord Milner and Monsieur Clemenceau, was handed to me. The higher command had been born.

After a quick lunch I immediately set to work. My plan had been formed for a long time. It was necessary to reestablish at once the liaison between the British and French armies, and to cover Amiens. Two things were required to do this:

First, the troops which were fighting must retreat no farther. Second, the French divisions arriving as reinforcements must be thrown without delay into the breach so as to fill it up.

These were the simple ideas that I conveyed to the different chiefs. By the evening of March 26, all those who were fighting the enemy knew what was expected of them—resistance, always more resistance, resistance to the utmost!

The next day, the 27th, I again visited the commanders, constantly reiterating that they must organize themselves on the spot and stand firm at all costs.

I made certain that my instructions were carried out, even visiting subordinate officers, when necessary. I did everything humanly possible to straighten out errors and mitigate shortcomings.

On the 28th I continued my rounds. Little by little I felt hope and confidence returning. Our resistance was growing stronger.

The enemy's attacks, however, continued violent. They had taken Montdidier.

It was at this point that there occurred a great symbolic gesture which conclusively demonstrated to the world the absolute solidarity of the Allies.

On the afternoon of March 28 I was in Clermont, a small town in the Department of Oise, then the headquarters of the Third French Army. Here General Pershing met me, and, with a generosity I shall never forget, said:

"At this critical moment, there is no question of any importance except that of fighting. Infantry, artillery, aviation—all we have is yours to do with as you please. I have come to tell you that the American people will be proud to participate in the greatest battle of history."

And General Bliss, who later represented America at Versailles, expressed like sentiments. He said:

"We are here to get killed! What is keeping you from making use of us?"

Thus the United States, prevented by the urgency of circumstances from participating in the agreement of Doullens, indicated their full and entire approval. What a noble gesture! What an admirable impulse!

I could not better respond to the wonderful good fellowship of the Americans than by having the First American division immediately take up its position before Montdidier—the very center of the German offensive.

Toward the end of March the German onslaughts against Amiens became less and less frequent and progressively decreased in intensity. The Allied front, now reconstituted, formed a firm barrier against the invading hosts. On April 4 the enemy was definitely stopped. The higher command had proved itself in the crucible of action.

The enemy now turned upon us in another sector. The next blow came in Flanders. The German plan was to destroy the left wing of the British armies, reach the Channel ports, and from there bombard the British coast with guns of unprecedented weight and length fabricated for that purpose.

On the 9th of April nine enemy divisions attacked along a solid front of about twelve miles between La Bassée and Armentières. These troops were soon reinforced by five new divisions, extending the battle nearly to Ypres. The struggle continued furiously for twenty long days with only intermittent rest for the troops at night.

At first the Germans met with some success, but they were finally halted in their advance by the arrival of our reserves, nine French divisions and one cavalry corps, which I had hurriedly thrown into the crisis.

The battle had been so furious that when a pause came the weariness almost to exhaustion of the armies made, comparatively, a calm for several weeks. I had but little indication of the enemy's future intentions. We expected another attack. Lacking information, however, regarding the German preparations, we could only make hypotheses.

We were of the general belief that the German

command would resume the maneuver in which it had almost succeeded and which seemed most advantageous from a strategic standpoint—an offensive between Amiens and Arras, the junction point of the Allied forces. If not this maneuver, we thought, then another offensive in Flanders.

We learned subsequently that Von Ludendorff reasoned differently. Behind the British troops in previous attacks he had found French units which halted his advance. He decided, therefore, to deal first with the French reserves, by a diverted attack on the French front, in order to fix them on this area. After obtaining this result he would suddenly resume his operations in full force against the British in the hope of breaking through at some point.

On May 27, in execution of this plan, thirty German divisions proceeded to attack the French positions between Soissons and Rheims. The maneuver was a complete surprise to us. The few French divisions holding the front were swept away, and after four days the enemy reached the Marne at Château-Thierry.

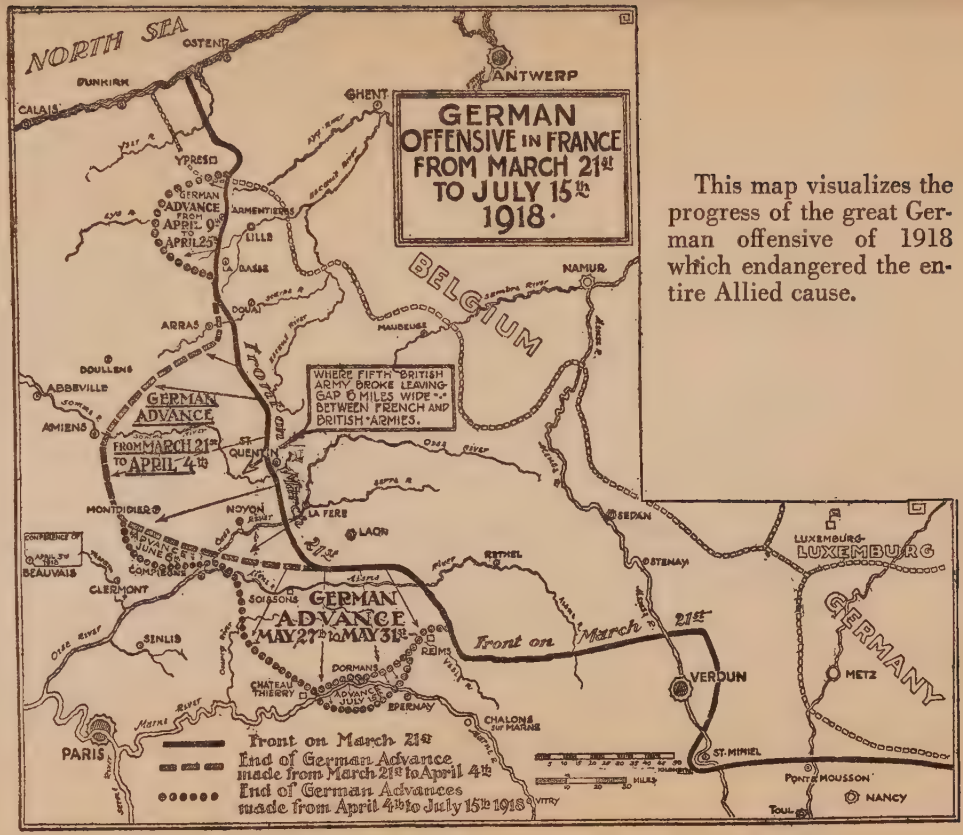
This was a considerable success and was in no way discounted by Von Ludendorff. It assured him the desired result of engaging the entire French reserve. Thirty-five French infantry divisions and six cavalry

divisions were finally participating in the battle. We even called upon other Allied reserves. Five British divisions, two American divisions, and two Italian divisions were placed in line.

Thanks to these reinforcements, the third enemy attack was checked. It was almost immediately followed by a fourth between the river Oise and Montdidier. On the 9th of June thirteen German divisions were rushed forward in the direction of Compiègne to attack the salient that our lines formed in this region. This offensive, expected and prepared for, was stopped after four days of fighting. It had achieved only a slight withdrawal of our front to the north of Compiègne.

Von Ludendorff now planned a fifth offensive, which he termed "the offensive for peace." He chose the region between Château-Thierry and Verdun as the battle-field. He apparently calculated upon finding the front in this region but loosely held. And no doubt he expected at least to gain tactical success enough to enable him to resume the offensive in Flanders under ideal conditions.

But the valor and spirit of our armies were now at their zenith, the Americans wherever they had appeared imparted fresh, youthful vigor and eagerness to the attack, and the whole battle-line of hundreds



This map visualizes the progress of the great German offensive of 1918 which endangered the entire Allied cause.

of miles, from the frontier of Germany in Lorraine to the Channel ports, was now under the eye and will of a single commander-in-chief.

The air service, the wireless and the telephone kept him informed of any extraordinary preparations of the enemy. Knowing the exact method of the German attack, the details of its execution could be foreseen, and the commander-in-chief and his staff were able to provide, not only for the defense, but for counter-attack.

Thus, on July 15, when the German divisions moved forward for the fifth time, they were stopped short in Champagne. The slight advance of their right in the direction of Epernay and to the south of the Marne only served to thrust the German forces farther into the vast pocket of Château-Thierry, thereby greatly heightening the danger to which they were exposed.

It was here that on July 18 the American, British, Italian and French forces were going to take the enemy by the throat and thereafter never relinquish their grasp.

It had now become necessary to transform my rôle of coordination into one of management. The decision to do this had been taken in a conference held on April 3, 1918, at Beauvais. Representatives of

the American, British and French governments were present. It was not until May 2 that the Italian government gave their approval to the new agreement.

Thus I now had strategic direction of military operations on the western front, with the official title of Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies in France. I was invested with the necessary powers to make decisions regarding the strategic employment of all the Allied forces. I could divide among them the responsibilities for defense and offense. I could make the exchanges between the French and Italian fronts. Between April and July, I had been able to have all the Allied reserves participate in the various defensive battles.

At first the action of the chief command manifested itself in the conduct of operations. But its field of activity was not limited to this. It went a great deal further. It extended to the needs and even to the organization of the various armies.

Here is an example. The British armies, after the fierce German attacks of March and April, 1918, showed a loss of 300,000 men and 14,000 officers. Nine of their divisions had to be dissolved. This diminished the total of our reserves at the very time that the enemy's forces were increasing.

I intervened and insisted both to Marshal Haig and

the government at London that the original number of British divisions be maintained. As a result it was decided that all except two of the dissolved units were to be reconstituted. But this could not be done until the middle of July. In the meantime we were obliged to make up the deficit. How?

There was only one way—an appeal to America!

Now, to what extent was America capable in the spring of 1918 of affording the Allies the *immediate* aid which they needed, especially in the way of infantry?

At this time, April, 1918, the American army in France had five fighting divisions, counting the units in course of transport or debarkation—seventy thousand American infantry to come to the aid of the cruelly battered British and French armies, whose losses had been most severe.

Faced with this critical situation, I arranged with Generals Bliss and Pershing that the troops sent to France during May and June should consist primarily of infantrymen and machine-gunners. The government at Washington approved our agreement, and the British government undertook to supply the necessary ships for transport.

During the month of May 240,000 men arrived from the United States. Two hundred and eighty

thousand more arrived in June. By the first of July there were at least 450,000 American infantrymen and machine-gunners in the ranks of the Allies.

With the rapid arrival of these large forces, other problems presented themselves. There had not been sufficient time in the United States fully to train and organize the fresh American units now being hurried to the front. The task had to be completed in France. Training offered no difficulties. But supplying the necessary means of combat to a modern army was another matter. What oversights, errors and delays to avoid!

In order to execute efficiently this important and urgent task, we created a general staff section in Paris whose duty was to centralize, coordinate and solve all questions relating to the equipment of the American army. I understand that this arrangement was appreciated by the American command, who always had suffered previously because it never knew exactly where and to whom to apply for necessary things.

There were other and very varied activities which I was compelled to undertake during the whole campaign of 1918, besides directing the armies at the front.

We endeavored to establish complete mutual aid among the Allies, as it was indispensable to our suc-

cess. We requested the French army to furnish 75 and 155 m.m. guns to the Americans, motor-trucks to the Belgians, asphyxiating projectiles to the Italians.

From the British we obtained tanks for the French, howitzers for the Americans, artillery and aircraft for the Belgians. We asked the American army to furnish aviator-pilots for French planes and we urged the United States to bring to France the steel required for the construction of tanks and the manufacture of shells.

It was also necessary to foresee the future and to provide munitions to conduct the war rigorously and incessantly for a long period ahead, no matter how protracted by the strong and still determined enemy.

Thus it was that in 1918, by arrangement with General Pershing, I requested the American government to send over eighty divisions by April, and one hundred divisions by June, 1919. We would then be certain of having an incontestable numerical superiority over the enemy during 1919 if the war should last that long.

The reply from Washington was: "You shall have the one hundred divisions requested and still more if necessary."

A commander of armies must be a student of psy-

chology as well as of tactics. When I was teaching at the Superior War College in Paris, I often quoted to my students the aphorism of Joseph de Maistre: "A battle lost is a battle which one believes is lost, for battles are not lost materially." And to emphasize the truth of this I pointed out numerous great battles of history which had been lost or won morally.

There is nothing that destroys an army's morale like constant retreat. To win battles an army must take the offensive. A wise general retreats only to get in a better position to attack the enemy.

Thanks to the French reserves, the British and French fronts had been reunited before the Germans realized the opportunity for a decisive victory that was well within their grasp. Amiens was thus saved and the Franco-British armies' communications preserved. The positions we occupied, however, were too close to Amiens and the Paris-Amiens railroad. Both were still within range of the enemy's guns. Thus, on April 3, my authority as commander-in-chief having been increased by the Beauvais agreement, confiding to me the strategic direction of all operations, I immediately ordered Marshals Haig and Petain to prepare an attack in force at that point.

This offensive was fixed for April 12. It never came off. We were forestalled by the Germans, who

attacked in Flanders on April 9 so vigorously as to compel us to throw a large part of our reserves into this region to stop a new German advance at that point.

On May 20, when this attack was stalled, I sent further directions to the commanders-in-chief. I reminded them that only by an offensive could we stop the enemy; that by initiating an effective attack we would regain the moral ascendency. I designated the places. First, there was to be a Franco-British offensive which was definitely to put Amiens outside of striking distance of the enemy. Then there was to be an offensive in the north to free the Bethune coal basin, which the Germans held under fire of their artillery.

But again a great and skilfully planned German offensive postponed the execution of our plans. On May 27 the enemy advanced on the Aisne. Our front here was but loosely held, so the German troops reached the Marne at Château-Thierry before we were able to check them. There the American Marines distinguished themselves in "The Battle of the Woods." The severe struggle had such unexpected results that we had to change our battle program and adopt a new one. Events offered us another and more advantageous field of action.

The Germans in their advance had rushed into a vast "pocket" between the Aisne and the Marne. the revictualing of the large number of troops in this area was effected by two or three railroads, all of which ran through Soissons. It was clear, therefore, that if we made ourselves masters of Soissons, or if we were able to keep it constantly under fire, we would prevent the provisioning of the troops in the "pocket" and render the Germans' position on the Marne untenable.

I directed General Petain to prepare an offensive with the Tenth and Sixth French armies. This action was to put us in possession of the heights dominating Soissons, from where we should be able to bombard the converging point of the railroads.

As preparations for this offensive were under way we learned that the enemy was getting ready to attack in Champagne.

Were we again to postpone our plans?

No! Conditions had changed. We now had considerable reserves available. These had been entirely reorganized and reequipped. We also had a considerable and daily increasing reserve of war material—cannons, tanks, munitions and airplanes.

These means in men and material not only would enable us to halt the Germans in their new offensive,

but would be sufficient to strike a severe counter-blow. And our strength was augmenting rapidly as the effectives of the American army constantly increased. We could now plan all our offensives on a constantly growing scale.

How strikingly different the situation in the enemy's camp! After expending tremendous efforts without achieving decisive results, the Germans were having serious difficulty in renewing their fighting units. The numerical superiority would shortly pass to the Allies. All the predictions that the Americans would not be able to get into the war in force were being shattered.

On July 13 and 14 I decided in accord with General Petain that the threatening German offensive in Champagne must be met at once by a counter-offensive. We were already prepared to advance at Soissons, and in a few days we extended our preparations of attack as far as Château-Thierry.

The German drive in Champagne started according to program on July 15. We immediately checked it. And on the 18th we began our counter-attack. All the world knows what followed. In fifteen days the enemy was forced back on the river Vesle. The Allies captured 30,000 prisoners, 600 cannon, 200 Minenwerfer and 3,000 machine-guns. Our front was

shortened thirty miles. The Paris-Châlons railroad was again ours and put in operation. The threat against Paris was ended. And, most important of all, after four months of defensive action imposed by the numerical superiority of the enemy, the initiative of operation now belonged to us.

In this magnificent action seven American divisions participated—the First, Second, Third, Twenty-Sixth, Twenty-eighth, Forty-second and Seventy-seventh. The place of honor in the thrust toward Soissons on July 18 was shared by the First and Second American divisions and some chosen French divisions. The Americans acquitted themselves admirably and indicated what was to come later at Saint-Mihiel and in the Meuse-Argonne.

It was difficult to ascertain the moral effect produced upon the enemy by the profound change in the situation of the two belligerents. We could imagine it and feel it, but it was not yet revealed, not yet palpable. What we did know, and it was the essential thing, was that, since July 18, the control of events had passed into our hands. By guarding the initiative through energetic action we would prevent further attacks of the enemy. We were relieved of all anxiety in the north and, as a result, had much greater freedom to plan attacks elsewhere.

At my headquarters on the 24th of July I met the three commanders of the Allied armies—Haig, Pershing and Petain. I said to them:

"The Allied armies have arrived at the turning of the road. In full battle they have just regained the initiative of operations. Their strength enables them to retain it! The principles of warfare command them to do so! The time has come to abandon the general defensive attitude hitherto imposed by our numerical inferiority. We must pass at once to the offensive and not give the enemy a chance to rest or reorganize his forces."

I told Marshal Haig I would put a French army under his command. This naturally increased his willingness to take the offensive. And I urged upon General Pershing the well-known fact that the American army, made up of spirited youths, was chafing to get fully into the struggle.

Finally we all heartily agreed. We parted with the understanding that the single command to all the Allied armies was henceforth to be "En avant!" (Forward!)

Our first offensive, executed on August 8 by British and French armies under the command of Marshal Haig, had for its objective the liberation of Amiens and the Paris-Amiens railroad that we had planned

as long ago as April 12. It started from the Albert-Montdidier front and its success was complete. "A day of mourning for the German Army," wrote Von Ludendorff. "Our first great misfortune," added Von Hindenburg.

On August 10 our objective was not only attained but so far exceeded that I decided to take immediate advantage of what seemed to me the disorder of the enemy. I extended our field of action from Arras to Soissons.

We continued the offensive on August 20 along a front of eighty-one miles. Three British and three French armies took part in the action. The battle was fierce; the enemy retreated over large areas. At the end of the month we reached the general line: Arras-Péronne-Noyon-Soissons. And by the middle of September, the Germans were forced back upon Von Hindenburg's famous position. It was from this very line they had set out six months before on their great offensive against Amiens—the offensive that was to win the war.

The success of the first part of our plan, which consisted of liberating Amiens, had surpassed our expectations. The second part, which called for an offensive to free the mining region of Bethune, was never undertaken, as the enemy evacuated all the

positions he occupied on the river Lys. The object of the third part of our plan was the wiping out of the salient of Saint-Mihiel.

I was early aware of American sentiments regarding Saint-Mihiel. When the soldiers of the United States first arrived in France, they evinced surprise at two situations; first, that although the war had been in progress for three years, the single command had not been instituted; and second, that the great salient of Saint-Mihiel had not been straightened out in four years.

I have already told of America's help in achieving the single command. It was only just, I therefore felt, that the reducing of the famous "rupture" of Saint-Mihiel should be left in their hands.

The American preparations for the Saint-Mihiel offensive were undertaken with thoroughness. They were facing the most formidable defenses that the Germans could erect during a period of four years to hold this vital point.

The attack began on September 12 at 5 A. M. It was preceded by four hours of artillery fire. The advance of the Americans was irresistible. In less than two days all objectives set had been achieved. The famous "rupture" no longer existed. Over 15,000 prisoners and 450 cannon had been taken.

For a first attempt of a "new" army it was a masterly achievement.

The moral effect of the victory of Saint-Mihiel was incalculable. The American army under its own commander-in-chief had met the enemy in a great battle and had vanquished him. In the crucible of an independent action the American army had proved itself. This fact could not fail to impress the German general staff and bring discouragement to its army.

It was now necessary to broaden our offensive. The enemy must be given no rest, nor allowed to slip from our grasp. The greater the front upon which we attacked, the more difficult it would be for him to reinforce his hard-pressed troops at any point. Thus, after August 20, we considerably widened our attack. Bit by bit we were spreading the conflagration. The wiping out of the Saint-Mihiel salient had greatly facilitated our actions. We could now even contemplate a general offensive from the North Sea to the river Meuse.

I had discussed such an offensive with General Petain as early as August 30. And on September 3, in view of the ever-increasing progress of our armies of the center, I directed General Petain, while fully sustaining his present actions, to prepare a Franco-American offensive extending from the river

Meuse to Rheims and progressing in the direction of Mézières.

I directed Marshal Haig at the same time to follow up and develop his attacks on Valenciennes, Saint-Quentin and Cambrai.

Lastly, I requested the King of the Belgians to take command of a group of armies composed of the Belgian divisions, a British army, and some French divisions. These forces were to capture the enemy's defenses around Ypres and then march toward Bruges and Courtrai.

Preparations for this new and enlarged offensive were rapidly pushed forward along the entire front. Everything was ready on September 26, and during the next two days the thunder of our cannon roared from the North Sea to the Meuse—on a battle front extending more than two hundred miles.

The Allied armies attacked in converging directions, along a front of two hundred miles.

The shock of the attack was extremely violent. The enemy gave way all along the line. But the obstacles we had to overcome were many and difficult.

On the east, where the Americans were operating, there was the hilly and wooded region of the Argonne. Here the scarcity of means of communication and the rugged nature of the land made the effective

handling of large forces particularly difficult. The Argonne was the pivot of the entire front. The Americans' attack was directed toward Mézières and Sedan, the German armies' most important centers of railroad communication. If the enemy fell back here, the avenue of supply for a great portion of his troops would be imperiled, and he would be forced to retreat along the whole eastern half of the front—a retreat that would be dangerously difficult to execute with the Americans in possession of the Argonne. It was the Achilles' heel of the German army.

In the center, where the Franco-British armies and several American divisions were engaged, there were the deep and formidable defenses of the Hindenburg line, which the Germans had established during the winter of 1916-17. They ran from Cambrai through Saint-Quentin to La Fère.

While on the north, where King Albert's group of armies was fighting, there were the low-lying marshes of Flanders. Here the advance of troops was extremely laborious, as the damp soil was made almost impassable for heavy guns by abandoned trenches and innumerable shell holes.

Thanks, however, to the will of the commanders, and the ardor and energy of the rank and file, every difficulty was surmounted, all Nature's obstacles were

overcome and the resistance of the enemy conquered. On October 15 the Franco-British armies, having pushed beyond the Hindenburg line, were stretched out along the line Douai, Cambrai, Saint-Quentin, Laon, Rethel, Vouziers.

To their right, the First American Army, now under immediate command of Lieutenant-General Liggett, after tremendous effort and fierce fighting, was master of the Argonne. The Sedan-Mézières line, the very heart of Germany's railroad connections with the front, lay directly before the onrushing soldiers from the United States. This great offensive of the Meuse-Argonne is, I believe, by far the greatest battle in American military history. Certainly none is more glorious.

On the Franco-British left the Flanders group of armies had reached Courtrai and were approaching Bruges. The difficult country had now been passed. The area before us was relatively easy to get over. All that was necessary for complete victory was the continued advance of our entire forces.

It was on October 19 that I set the following objectives: For the group of armies in Flanders—Brussels; for the British and French armies—the river Meuse from Givet to Mézières; for the American army—Sedan.

It was toward these objectives that the Allied forces advanced victoriously at the end of October and during the early days of November.

The enemy fell back farther and farther before our fighting hosts. Their retreat was covered by units strongly equipped with artillery and machine-guns. And they left behind them dire destruction which the necessities of warfare did not always justify.

We pursued the retreating Germans as closely as possible. We were never sure that in spite of our close pursuit they would not stop and again face us along some strong position—the line of the Meuse, for instance.

It was necessary for us to anticipate such an event and to prevent it. This could best be done by still farther extending our offensive. I, therefore, on October 20, directed General Petain to prepare to advance in Lorraine, east of the river Moselle. This new attack was to be in the direction of Metz and the valley of the Saar, and was to be executed by two French armies and the newly organized Second American Army, under the immediate command of Lieutenant-General Bullard. These were to be ready to go forward about November 15.

The preparations for this new push in no way slowed up the immense operations along the rest of

the two-hundred-mile front. Everywhere, day and night, we were driving forward, and driving hard.

The Allied armies were now intent upon reaching and crossing the Rhine. The Germans would be at our mercy as soon as the great river barrier had been conquered

On to the Rhine! This became our battle-cry. We were determined, if necessary, to continue throughout the winter the tremendous offensive begun on July 18. And we were preparing constantly to increase the effect of our attack by extending it to the river Moselle and even beyond the Vosges Mountains.

Developments now came very fast! The complete debacle of the enemy seemed an absolute certainty after November 1. Revolution threatened Germany's leaders—the inevitable consequence of military defeat.

On November 5 the German army began a general retreat along a front of one hundred and thirty-two miles. Von Ludendorff resigned! The kaiser prepared to flee!

On the 6th of November, General Pershing reported:

"A division of our first corps has reached a point on the Meuse opposite Sedan, twenty-five miles from our line of departure. The strategical goal which

was our highest hope has been gained. We have cut the enemy's main line of communications and nothing but surrender or an armistice can save his army from complete disaster."

November 8, the German plenipotentiaries came to solicit an armistice.

By the 9th of November, the Americans had reached Sedan, the French were at Mézières and pushing forward into Belgium toward Chimay, the British had occupied Maubeuge and Mons, and the Belgians, having retaken Ghent, solemnly entered their beloved city.

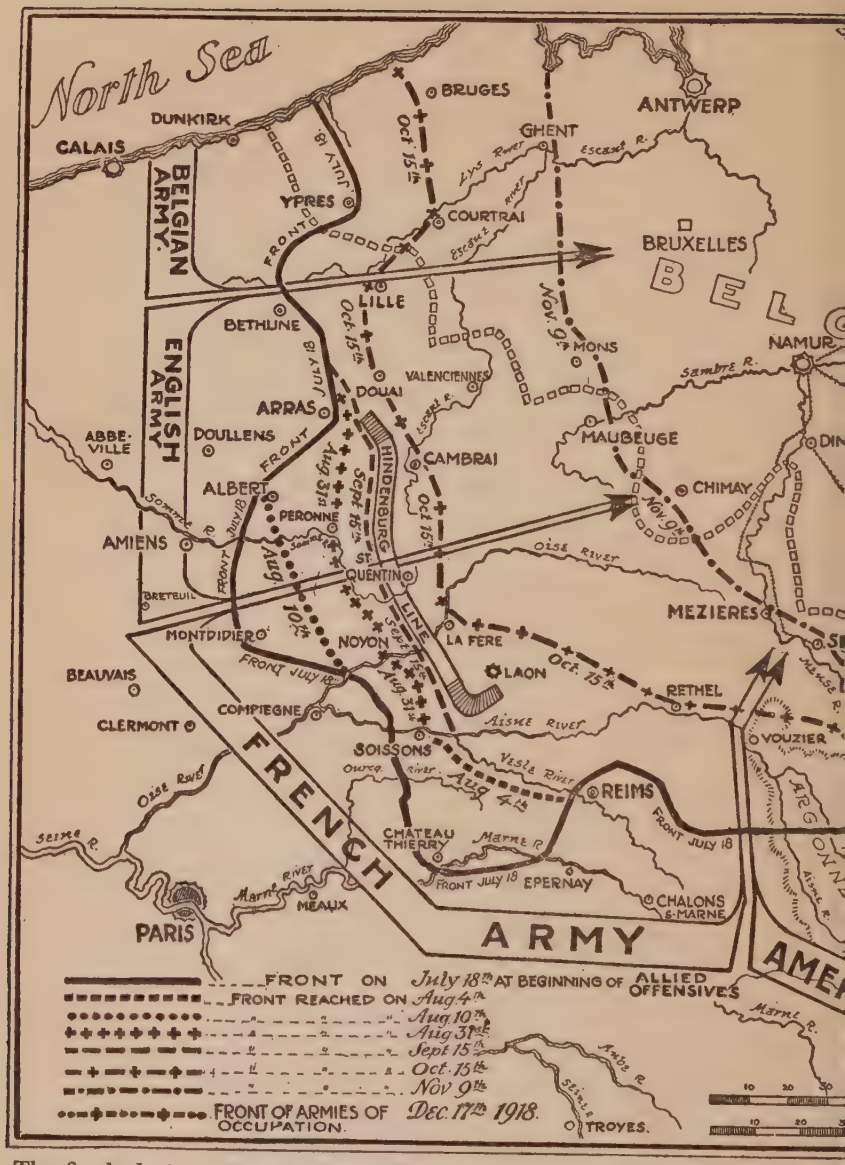
On that day I sent a fervent appeal to the commanders of the various armies:

"The enemy, disorganized by our repeated attacks, is giving way all along the front. It is important forcefully to maintain and also to speed up our actions. I appeal to the energy and initiative of the commanders-in-chief and to their armies to render decisive the results already obtained."

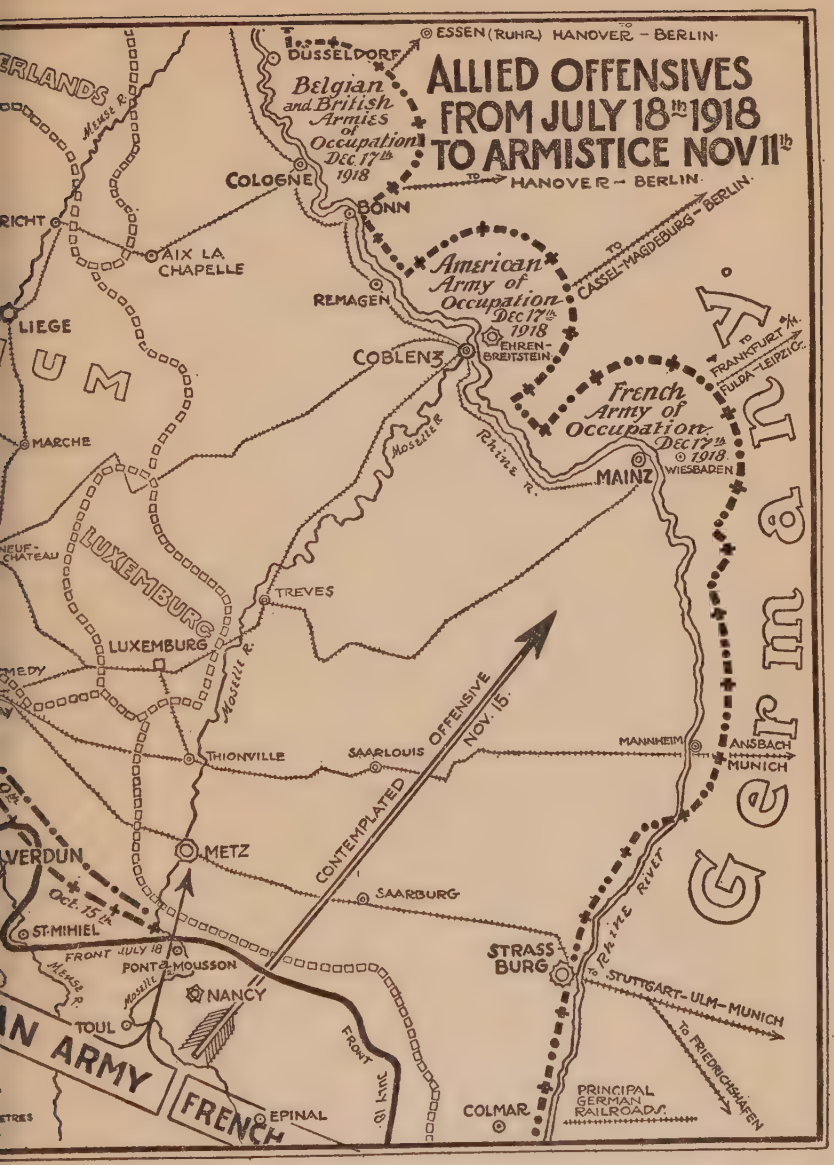
Sensing their flags being swept onward to victory, they all gallantly answered:

"Count on us! We will march forward till the end."

What a glorious spirit! It more than compensated for the suffering of the past and the deep agony that



The final, decisive drives of the Allied armies. In the portion of German



t of the Rhine, the areas of post-war occupation by the Allies are shown.

all Allied commanders experienced at the beginning of 1918.

The Allied armies were now certain that the battle was won, and it was won. The truth of the famous aphorism of Joseph de Maistre had again been demonstrated.

Before the morning of November 11 dawned, Germany, incapable of stemming the victorious tide of our armies, submitted to all the conditions specified by the Entente for the stoppage of hostilities.

On December 1 our armies entered Germany; on the 9th they reached the Rhine, and on the 17th they installed themselves on the right bank of the river. From there they saw the conquered Germany. They permitted the Allied governments to dictate to the Central Empires the terms of peace.

Thanks to the unity of all, the Allied armies had accomplished their task. This unity had been constantly sustained during an uninterrupted battle lasting for eight months. In all history there is no military effort to be compared to this.

That the single command played an essential rôle in the Allies' victory every serious student of the war realizes. Although the expressions "single command," "higher command" and "united command" have won great popularity, I prefer the expression

"higher management." The former are, no doubt, more impressive, but if taken literally they convey a less accurate idea of the real situation.

Do not imagine that the command, in the military sense of the word, can be exercised over very different armies by the relatively simple means that a general is accustomed to employ in handling his own army.

Compulsion—impossible to obtain except through constant appeals to the various governments—will not insure the carrying out of orders in armies of different nations. The orders will always be diversely understood, interpreted and executed.

The higher management, which the united command represents, must pursue one objective—it must elevate the morale and increase the strength of each army while coordinating the efforts of all.

This objective can be achieved solely through the confidence which the governments, the commanders and their soldiers accord to the supreme commander. His past and, more important, his acts will decide whether or not he is to receive this confidence, which alone can enable him to lead the different armies to victory.

Then, too, there must be *understanding* at any price. Communications must be frank and clear! The demands which the different commanders-in-

chief make of their governments must be supported and coordinated.

It is only right that the man who is to exercise the general military direction of a coalition be given the commission of commander. This will better affirm his authority in the eyes of all. But no matter what title he possesses, it will not protect him for long from criticism, resistance and differences of views. He must prove his abilities. His prestige and power will depend entirely upon his achievements.

The main thing is to make the coalition work. Confidence unites and strengthens the various groups. There must be constant conferring. There is danger in an inflexible command, as it is liable to check and divide forces which must work together if victory is to be won.

Victory! This is the end. Every means is good as long as it leads quickly to this. The whole problem is when and how to employ all the resources at one's disposal.

I avoided numerous or large conferences. They lead usually to long discussions, rarely to proper decisions. There were only two general conferences of all the commanders-in-chief during that last glorious offensive. One was on July 24, 1918, when I outlined our offensive program for the summer. The

other was on October 25, when we decided together upon the military terms of the armistice.

On the other hand, I had frequent talks with my distinguished collaborators. There were about sixty meetings with General Petain, still more with Marshal Haig or General Pershing. I met each one at least every four or five days.

Our conversations were generally preceded or followed by the dispatch of a letter, which served as a basis for the conversation or stated the conclusions arrived at. These conversations were always dominated by a spirit of cordiality and confidence, which greatly aided me in my task.

And now let me state in conclusion that I entertain the deepest feelings of gratitude toward all those whom I had the honor to command, whatever their rank or their flag.

During peace, as during the war, my thoughts are constantly with them. They were the true artisans of our common victory.

OFFICIAL FIGURES OF LOSSES ON WESTERN FRONT IN 1918 AMONG FRENCH, BRITISH AND GERMAN FORCES

FRENCH

Killed, missing or prisoners	220,000
Wounded	450,000
Total	670,000

BRITISH

Killed	137,564
Wounded, missing and prisoners	715,297
Total	852,861

GERMANS

Killed	350,000
Wounded	825,000
Prisoners	195,000
Total	1,370,000

[The French wounded include only those sent to hospitals in France and not those who were treated only at the front.]

GENERAL VON LUDENDORFF'S

Narrative as Chief Strategist of the German Armies During the Latter Part of the World War.

IV

THE World War of 1914-18 was utterly unlike most former wars. For the German people, located in the very heart of Europe and exposed to attacks from all sides, it was a war for existence, a war of the people in the fullest sense, a war which devastated private and public life.

There was no possible doubt of the intentions of Germany's enemies. They meant to destroy Germany as a world power. In October, 1914, Delcassé, French foreign minister, wrote to Isvolski, Russian ambassador in Paris, that the main goal of the Entente was "the destruction of the economic and political power of the German Empire."

The inevitableness of the war, with all its subsequent ramifications, was not recognized by the Germans before the outbreak of hostilities when I vainly endeavored to compel full compulsory army service. Nor was the inherent nature of the struggle comprehended by the imperial German government during the first years of combat.

The Germans were politically immature. They did

not realize the point of view of other peoples. Most of our diplomatists were bunglers.

This is the only possible explanation why Germany, conscious of her own natural powers, but unconscious of what others thought of her, failed to use all her resources in the conduct of the war.

Influenced by political parties, subject to secret and sinister interests more powerful than the organized government, Germany was also obsessed with the fear that her resources might soon be exhausted. This fear made her content with military half-victories.

The policy of over-caution runs counter to the lessons of history. It has been proved again and again that when peoples are fighting for their existence victory comes only to nations that cast out fear and fight with all their might.

At the end of August, 1916, when I assumed the management of the supreme command together with Field Marshal von Hindenburg, the war had been on for two full years. The Central Powers—Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria—had not yet made any definite progress toward an honorable peace.

The enemies' "will to war" was unbroken. A stalemate existed. In all theaters of war—in France,

in Russia, in Italy, in the Balkans, and in Asia-Minor —we had surrendered the initiative to our foes. Everywhere the enemy dictated the action.

Typical examples of the activities of our enemies at this time were in the western theater—the tremendous offensive conducted by the French and the British on the Somme; in the eastern theater, the masterly offensive of the Russians under General Brussilov, which profoundly shook the Austrian's eastern front; the Austrians had suffered a setback at the hands of the Italians; Rumania at that critical moment joined the Allies in spite of their Hohenzollern king.

On the seas, the German fleet had given a glorious account of itself in the battle of Skagerrack on May 3, 1916. But the continually growing pressure of the English blockade was increasingly effective, causing us terrible hardships at home.

Field Marshal von Hindenburg and I agreed in August, 1916, to scrap the whole system of "wise economy of available resources" that had dominated Germany's policy thus far.

The Central Powers and especially Germany were otherwise doomed to suffer slow but sure suffocation.

The German people had to be aroused to a thorough understanding that their country's fate was at

stake, and that each and every one, no matter what the age or sex, must be prepared to sacrifice life itself for the threatened fatherland.

The Hindenburg program for war industries and the so-called "Auxiliary Service Act" were immediately inaugurated. The latter provided that all those who had not been drafted for the rank and file were to serve in the different branches of the war industries.

The success of these measures did not come up to expectations. The supreme command was not permitted to execute them as it designed them. It could merely make suggestions to the government.

If I had only known at the time that secret influences reaching beyond the boundary of Germany were more powerful than the government of any nation, I should have acted differently.

Our enemies then had a tremendous numerical superiority on both fronts, Russia being still in the war, requiring more than one hundred German divisions to combat her. We had to deal with our enemies each in turn. Rumania, our newest enemy, was at once attacked, and by the winter of 1916 she was eliminated.

Our occupation of Rumania opened economic sources of well nigh inestimable value. The petro-

leum and agricultural products of Rumania were of extreme importance to the Central Powers, which had been deprived of imports from neutral countries.

As far as the other theaters of war were concerned, all that we were able to do was to thwart the attacks of our foes in turn by employing a newly developed system of tactics. This new tactical system called for the use of all technical aids to a far greater extent than previously. Also, defensive battles were conducted in a more mobile manner. If our enemies' attacks had been coordinated by a single commander we could not have done this.

It was especially our aim to economize our man-power, to replace men by machines. I hoped eventually to succeed in balancing our man-power with that of the enemy so that we would ultimately assume the offensive.

The divergence between both the man-power and economic strength of the Central Powers and that of their surrounding enemies was so great that the change which I hoped for could only be brought about through jeopardizing England's economic life while we were still able to hold our line.

I considered England our most dangerous enemy, as Great Britain's economic resources seemed almost inexhaustible.

The only means of destroying Great Britain's economic power which offered itself was an unrestricted and an intensified submarine war in English waters. This program of submarine warfare had been weakly postponed time and again for political reasons, mainly having to do with the United States.

We expected an intensified submarine campaign to cut down England's import of war materials from the United States. In no other way could we turn the scales of war in our favor. We expected also to react on England's general economic life, in a manner analogous to England's hunger blockade upon Germany. In short, the intensified submarine war was primarily a weapon directed against the English home front. But that intensified submarine war was first modified, then temporarily almost abandoned for political reasons.

The German Naval Office expected the U-boats to sink so many enemy ships that England in particular would give up hope of destroying Germany, and would be willing to enter into peace negotiations. These, it was hoped, would culminate in honorable conditions acceptable to both parties. But our undersea war was arrested. The delay was fatal.

Politicians assumed that unrestricted submarine warfare would bring the United States into the war

against Germany, and that Germany would then lose the war, as Ambassador von Bernstorff cabled. Unrestricted U-boat warfare would have been renounced altogether if it had been possible to obtain the guarantee that the United States would remain out of the war. But no such guarantee could be obtained. Our delay was fatal. If the submarine war had been pressed with all our energy and resources, America would not have had time to enter the war before it was won. President Wilson would undoubtedly have refused to enter the war when victory was crowning the Central Powers.

I do not know whether there are still serious-minded people in the United States who are inclined to deny the correctness of this opinion or in any way to doubt it now after the "Intimate Papers of Colonel House," as well as the letters of Ambassador Walter H. Page to Wilson, have been published.

President Wilson did not embark upon the war immediately after Germany again announced unrestricted U-boat warfare the following year. Victory was then within the very grasp of German arms. President Wilson only wrote warning or menacing letters.

When, on February 1, 1917, unrestricted submarine warfare was resumed, the first few months

yielded astounding results. The amount of tonnage sunk reached tremendous proportions. The British prime minister in his private confidential dispatches foresaw defeat. Around the end of March, Admiral Jellicoe told the American Admiral Sims that England could hold out until November, but no longer.

England availed herself of all neutral bottoms wherever found by simply seizing them for use as munition ships and transports in defiance of international law. And the neutrals hardly raised any hue or cry.

Thus U-boat warfare did not hit England hard or quickly enough to force her to enter peace negotiations on a basis acceptable to Germany before the United States entered the war. But unrestricted submarine warfare did help successfully to balance the situation along the fronts until after the debacle of Russia. Then German arms entertained renewed hope of bringing about a decision against France and England before the Americans could get over to France and into the battle.

In the spring of 1917, in the western theater of war, we successfully stemmed the tide of the onrushing Entente troops along the Aisne, and in the Champagne and the Artois, in spite of the fact that these attacks were supported by tremendous war material.

The losses of the enemy were so great that serious mutinies developed in the French army.

In the second half of 1917 we gradually assumed the offensive.

I first aimed at Russia, which was weakened by revolution. The Russian army collapsed under our victories at Tarnopol, Riga, Dagöe and Oesel. Toward the end of the year Russia, joined by Rumania, entered into armistice negotiations with the Central Powers.

Also, in the fall of 1917, Italy was badly defeated in the course of a short but valiant offensive from the Isonzo to the Piave. Unfortunately, because of the situation in the western theater of war, and especially on account of the battle of Flanders, which raged without a let-up from June until November, I was in no position to dispatch sufficient German troops to the Italian front to bring about a definite war-deciding decision there.

But the year 1917, fraught with many crises, ended with much promise for Germans. After defeating Russia and Italy we had succeeded in gaining some freedom of action for our last and most difficult task—the destruction of the Allied armies on the western front.

When Field Marshal von Hindenburg and myself

decided upon a big offensive the political, military and psychological situations all seemed to require quick and decisive action. We all realized that if American men and resources actually were thrown into the scale they would win the war.

Time, as was always the case during the entire war, was again at work against the Central Powers.

The sinking morale at home was then badly in need of some remedy against the trifold poison of an extended hunger blockade, an unscrupulous enemy propaganda, and a destructive revolutionary agitation.

Military victories alone would quickly defeat the last two sinister enemies at home and give the people the confidence and tenacity that make an army invincible.

Our weak allies, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria, were hardly able to carry on any longer. They had placed all hopes upon Germany, now facing a new antagonist in the United States, who, having at last declared war on us in the spring of 1917, was known to be making tremendous preparations for a new and greater offensive than ever before.

If America succeeded within a short span of time in drilling, equipping and shipping her troops to France, there to enter the front lines, the numerical

superiority we had gained by defeating Russia would be more than offset.

The German army of 1918 was no longer the wonderful weapon of war we had put into the field four years before. It had not as keen an edge as in 1914, but it was by no means dull! If the war should continue much longer, however, the quality of the troops was liable rapidly to decline. Replacing man-power had now become a serious problem and also providing adequate horses, guns, ammunition, etc.

One of the most important gifts of a leader in the field is his knowledge of the human heart. I hope I may say of myself, without undue conceit, that I was very sensitive to the heart-beat of the German soldier. I knew only too well all his worries and sorrows, all his desires and hopes.

For more than three years the German soldier in France and Belgium had been assigned to play the almost unendurable part of an anvil upon which the hammer of the enemy beat down uninterruptedly. Now, at last, the anvil craved the part of the hammer. The German army, drilled for attack, clamored for an offensive.

Our men in the trenches knew too well that only a military victory would bring about the peace which they longed for so fervently. And they also knew

that chances for a victory would vanish soon unless we could take the initiative and force a decision.

Field Marshal von Hindenburg and myself believed that public sentiment in the enemy countries could be effectually influenced in favor of peace negotiations if we succeeded in winning decisive battles. The world always favors a winner.

We clearly saw that to gain our ends strategy and politics had to cooperate closely. Military aims had to coordinate minutely with sane and clear political ideas.

It was our intention, therefore, to synchronize the intended military offensive with a far-reaching political offensive directed against the English home front. Until America's entrance into the war could make itself felt in a military way the English home front had to be considered the foundation upon which the enemy's resistance was built.

In January, 1918, I submitted a memorandum to the chancellor of the empire, Count von Hertling. I asked for the organization of a dexterous, purposeful and consistent propaganda to support and further Lord Lansdowne's "patriotic peace movement" in England. This propaganda was to convince the English people that it was merely David Lloyd George's imperialistically ambitious "knockout" policy that

prolonged the war; and that it was possible and wise to stop the measureless bloodshed and suffering and make a peace that would protect the honor and safety of England.

I wrote the imperial chancellor: "Today words may be looked upon as battles. Correct words are battles won. Incorrect words are battles lost. If we aim to enhance our chances for victory on the actual field of battle by victories behind the English front, our words must be chosen so as to make it possible for the English peace party to stand before their people and say: 'If you would only let us guide you, the way for peace negotiations will be open and the honor and safety of England will be guaranteed.' "

Unfortunately, Germany's weak and clumsy political administration hardly accomplished anything toward putting into effect these clear and concise ideas concerning the coordination of political and military plans.

Later in the same year, around the beginning of June, 1918, to be exact, when the very pinnacle of military victory had been achieved by the German army, carrying the offensive beyond the Chemin-des-Dames as far as the Marne, I again appealed to the imperial chancellor to organize a political propaganda offensive against the English home front. I wrote

that the English peace movement should be urgently pressed now, in the hour of our greatest triumph, when the British field marshal publicly confessed that he was fighting in despair with his "back to the wall."

All my insistence came to naught, as a result of the feeble and inept conduct of the political administration of the empire.

The supreme command did not delude itself as to the difficulty of the task the German army faced on the western front in the spring of 1918.

Our attack had to be carried forward through the enemy's lines and beyond his fortified positions into open country in northern France. It required all our skill and concentrated strength. But several blows, delivered at intervals and against different points of the front, would be necessary to maintain the mobile warfare and end the long stalemate that had been enduring for four years on the western front, since the first battle of the Marne in 1914.

By the middle of March, 1918, we withdrew forty divisions (400,000 men) from Russia and Rumania and eight (80,000 German troops) from Italy. Thus, at the beginning of the spring offensive of 1918, the German forces on the western front reached 193 divisions and three brigades (1,936,000 men).

The Allies' forces at this time fluctuated between

167 and 180 divisions. Accordingly, the German forces enjoyed for only a few weeks a slight numerical superiority as to divisions. According to intercepted wireless we received, the American flood of nearly 300,000 young, fresh fighting men a month had already begun to flow to France.

Our front in Greater Russia still necessitated sufficient garrisoning to prevent Russian bands from invading. Rumania had to be kept under our power, and we had to send all of twenty divisions (200,000 men) into the Ukraine.

The food problem of the Central Powers had become momentous both for the army and the home population. The last Rumanian harvest had been a complete failure. It was necessary to force the Ukraine peasants to work for us to produce food for our armies, and the Emperor Karl of Austria, who had succeeded the old warrior Emperor Franz Joseph, was a weakling, completely under the influence of his wife, Empress Zita, whose sympathies were all with our enemy.

In these last terrible months, with our allies falling away or weakly failing us, we had great difficulties in equipping our men. Horses for the artillery were lacking. Only actual attack (shock) divisions were fully equipped.

For political as well as military reasons, we selected the English front as the place to attempt the break through. We assumed that England would be more impressed and more eager for peace after her own divisions had suffered most.

We tried to find the English front's weakest point and selected England's southernmost trenches between Arras and La Fère, defended by the British Fifth Army, under General Sir Hubert Gough.

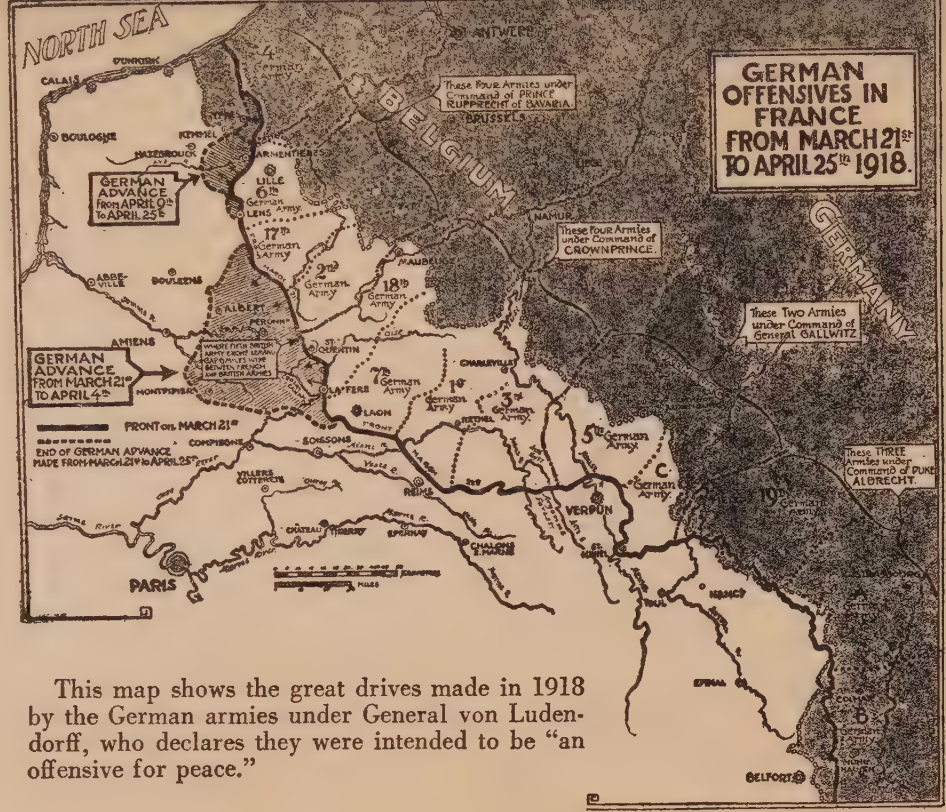
It was good high land and dry. We didn't have to wait for the interminable rains to stop. As the Americans were due soon, we could not afford to wait.

To drive a wedge between the English and the French was our strategical goal between Arras-La Fère. We meant to push the English toward the Channel coast by frontal attacks and defeat the enemy by sections.

Our attack began on March 21, 1918. As Marshal Foch himself describes it in his excellent account: "A deafening clash of thunder suddenly broke along the French front from Arras to Noyon. The German artillery was coming into action along a line sixty-five miles long. The Central Powers were beginning the offensive that was to win the war."

Rather, it was the German offensive for peace.

The brunt of the attack fell to the Seventeenth and



This map shows the great drives made in 1918 by the German armies under General von Ludendorff, who declares they were intended to be "an offensive for peace."

Second German armies, part of the group of armies commanded by Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria. They consisted of more than thirty-five divisions equipped with approximately 1,500 heavy guns and 2,200 field pieces.

The southern wing of our mobile front, made up of the group of armies commanded by the German Crown Prince, was ordered to protect our left flank against French attacks that were sure to be started to relieve the English. This group of armies counted twenty-four divisions, with 1,600 light and 1,000 heavy pieces of artillery.

From the very start, the battle developed differently from our expectations. The Seventeenth Army of General von Bülow and the right wing of General von Marwitz's Second Army were able to make but little progress, and that slowly, because of the stubborn opposition they encountered to the southwest of Cambrai. On the other hand, the left wing of the Second Army and the whole of General von Hutier's Eighteenth Army succeeded in taking extensive areas in the country west of Saint-Quentin. They soon reached the Somme near Péronne, and shortly after crossed the Crozat Canal.

I was now faced with the difficult problem of deciding whether I should stop the victorious progress

of General von Hutier's Eighteenth Army, which had been entrusted to cover our left flank against the French. This would mean forcing a decision on our right wing north of the Somme. It would necessitate throwing more effectiveness into battle, so as to overcome unexpected stubborn opposition of the enemy at the other point. The alternative was the inauguration of an entirely new strategical plan.

When a commander is bent upon breaking through the enemy's positions it is not always possible to adhere closely to a preconceived plan, for the break does not always occur where it is most confidently expected. The strategist who sticks to his initial plan when things do not develop as he expected is in danger of losing his objective. To break through an enemy's line effectively, it is necessary to exploit any initial success at any weak point. The gap thus forced open must be widened as a flood widens a hole in a wall (levee). And all setbacks at other points of the line must be counterbalanced.

On March 26 our troops reached the line Albert-Noyon. General Gough's Fifth English Army was shattered to bits. In complete disorder, it drew back in a westerly direction toward Amiens. A wide gap had been opened between the English and the French fronts. It was Marshal Foch who, with marvelous

rapidity, sent French reserve divisions to this breach, prevented a permanent break in the Allied front and saved the British army.

I was personally much interested in reading Marshal Foch's graphic description of the severe dangers which the Allied forces faced at this time. I noted with great satisfaction that the new plan of operations which I inaugurated on the evening of March 26 was based upon a correct analysis of conditions prevailing in the camp of my opponent. Those military critics who have severely criticized me for my decision of March 26 are thus proved to be wrong in their contentions.

My new plan was to concentrate our offensive toward our left wing, where we had been most successful. I expected completely to cut off the English from the French by having the Second and Eighteenth German armies advance around the left wing of the French near Noyon.

The leadership of Foch, now in supreme command of the Allied armies, was undoubtedly one, if not the chief, factor that thwarted my intentions. With tremendous energy, the marshal threw all available troops into the gap.

Until the enemy's broken front was restored to its former wall-like solidity, victory beckoned to the Ger-

man troops if they continued to attack. But, unfortunately, the German Eighteenth Army commander, after reaching Montdidier on March 27, did not press forward, but waited for two days for his right wing, the Second German Army, to advance toward Amiens.

Both German armies thus lost that glorious momentum that carried them forward at the beginning of the offensive. On March 30 the situation was such the general staff had to be satisfied with a limited undecisive victory. My heart was heavy when I was compelled to arrest the offensive.

The attempt, after a few days of rest and after receipt of sufficient ammunition, to take the extremely strategically important rail-head of Amiens also failed. The attack ended on April 4.

After reading Marshal Foch's statement, I am certain that the German offensive of March 21, 1918, would not have failed of its objective if, in accordance with my suggestions, the advance had been constantly sustained, thus making it impossible for the enemy to reorganize or for Foch's reinforcements to have time to come up.

Forty British divisions had been severely beaten. Their fighting strength had been destroyed for a long time to come. Their losses in killed, injured, prisoners and captured war material put victory within

our reach, but for two days' pause by us, fatal to us, enabling Foch to save them.

This German offensive in the spring of 1918—our last great effort—that for two days split the British and French armies, was really an offensive for peace. We wanted to force our enemies to enter peace negotiations. We were at last convinced that America was able to put her tremendous forces into war.

On March 21 and again April 9 we executed two powerful attacks against the British—one along the Somme and the other in Flanders. Both had resulted in great gains of territory, but we had failed of our complete objective—actually to separate the British forces from the French and to break through the British front far enough to bring the battle into open country. We were intent upon an open field warfare on the western front, for only through mobile warfare could a real military decision be reached. But Marshal Foch's promptitude and energy prevented the success of our plan.

After the abortive results of our first two blows we were faced with a most perplexing problem.

What, after all, proves the greatness of a leader in the field? It is his gift of one-sidedness, the stifling of all doubts, the utter disregard for any timid-

ity which he may harbor in his heart of hearts, the unshakable tenacity with which he holds on to the great resolution in his soul.

Marshal Foch is absolutely correct in stating that the most important virtue of a leader consists in that strength of will which prevents him from wavering even in the most critical moments, and which will not permit him to doubt the ultimate victorious outcome of the battle in which he is engaged.

I still, therefore, held on to the idea of delivering a decisive blow against the British. This could best be done in Flanders, where the positions we had reached at the end of our last offensive offered better chances for the continuation of operations than on the Amiens front.

It was my conviction, however, that it was necessary to attract the enemy's attention to some other part of the front so as to induce him to divert his strong reserves now concentrated in Flanders.

An attack was ordered on the front held by the German Crown Prince along the Chemin-des-Dames. This offensive could not be executed immediately, but only after the troops had been rested and preparations made. The necessary delay here was to the advantage of the enemy, as the American forces were daily increasing. But there was no other solution.

Toward the end of May General von Boehn's Seventh Army and a part of General von Bülow's First Army began to advance along the Aisne front. This operation was a real surprise for the enemy. The part of the front against which our attack was directed was only thinly garrisoned and could draw on but few reserves.

Our initial goal had been none too ambitious, but the quick and clever exploitation of our first far-reaching successes won us a rich gain in area as well as enormous booty. The chances for a successful execution of an attack in Flanders against the English, planned as the principal issue of the whole undertaking, had been essentially enhanced.

Marshal Foch agrees with me in this. According to his own statement, "the wisely and ambitiously conceived" German offensive against the Aisne front interfered with the execution of a counter-attack in Flanders which he had already planned and ordered.

Foch now faced the necessity of withdrawing the greater part of his reserves from Flanders to reinforce the jeopardized Marne front. Eventually not less than thirty-five French divisions of infantry and six divisions of cavalry, about 400,000 men, were drawn into the battle between the Aisne and the Marne.

In addition, five English, two American and two

Italian divisions were also used to reinforce this part of the front.

(The fighting strength of all divisions except the American toward the end of the war was around 10,000 men. The American was 20,000.)

It was on June 2 that David Lloyd George, together with Premier Clemenceau, of France, and Premier Orlando, of Italy, in agreement with Marshal Foch, appealed to the President of the United States, stating that there was grave danger of the Allies losing the war unless their numerical inferiority was quickly remedied by the arrival of American troops. This proves that the moral and material success of the third German offensive of 1918 was very great.

A second attack by the troops of the German Crown Prince was now planned for July. This attack was on both sides of Rheims, and was to ameliorate the tactical situation of General von Boehn's Seventh Army, whose flanks, resting on the Vesle, were dangerously exposed as his center had advanced to the Marne. The offensive was also to force more withdrawal of enemy forces from Flanders to save Rheims.

I did not delude myself at this time as to the imminence or the strength of the American forces then coming into action. The French troops in many sectors of the front were being replaced by Americans,

and the quality of the new forces was already manifest to me.

The German general staff estimated for me that on July 1, 1918, there were a round million American troops on French soil, of which 600,000 were already fighting. Their divisions, which we estimated to number twenty-two, were twice as strong as our own in actual number of infantry. America was evidently throwing all of her almost inexhaustible resources into the great battle.

Wherever the American soldier had made his appearance on the front, he had proved himself not very well trained, but extremely eager and even too rash, with apparently inexhaustible nervous energy. It still remained to be seen, however, whether the new divisions which had not yet been in action would be equal to the regulars that turned the tide at Château-Thierry. It also remained to be seen whether American leadership, lacking tactical and technical experience in handling even single divisions, could handle great armies, especially in mobile warfare.

There was no chance any more for the German field army to obtain reinforcements. It was impossible to draw troops from other theaters of war. Reinforcements from home grew less and less. The few that came consisted of rehabilitated casualties and con-

valescents. Some were drawn from non-occupied units, old men employed behind the front and in occupied territories. The actual fighting strength of many battalions had fallen below five hundred men.

Also, the process of moral disintegration induced by enemy propaganda was not only undermining the home front, but also spreading in the rank and file of the field army.

But in spite of everything Field Marshal von Hindenburg and myself maintained stout hearts. We still confidently believed that the shock power of our troops would prove adequate to the task awaiting them.

To surround our own intentions and measures with impenetrable secrecy was indispensable. We had to surprise the enemy at some weak spot. If this could be done, a German victory on the Marne and in Champagne, even as late as July, 1918, would have changed the whole war situation in favor of the fatherland.

The Americans would have found themselves faced with the very difficult task of rushing up and down the front, supporting their sorely pressed allies first here and then there.

Unfortunately, the most important condition for the success of our new offensive proved lacking. The

failure of the German attack on both sides of Rheims in the middle of July, 1918, was not due to insufficient preparation or mistakes of the various army command or lack of available fighting power or the demoralization of our troops, but purely and simply to the fact that the element of surprise was absent.

The Americans obtained from treacherous German prisoners what and where we were preparing. In some cases perhaps the prisoners did not know the meaning of what they themselves revealed. But the American officers learned along which parts of the front attack would be staged.*

As the German attack at Rheims on July 15 did not succeed in its first onslaught, the offensive was stopped the next day so as to avoid the useless waste of strength. The troops of General von Boehn's Seventh Army, which had crossed the Marne, were withdrawn.

But in spite of the tactical disappointment in which these operations resulted, we had realized our main intention. We had actually succeeded in weakening the enemy's front in Flanders by forcing him to with-

*[Editor's note: The Allies possessed a remarkably fine service for the interrogation of prisoners, who in replying to what appeared as harmless questions often gave information of the greatest importance. It is hardly accurate to call this treachery.]

The crisis of the World War is shown in this map with Von Ludendorff's last great offensive turned into final retreat.

draw reserves from there. Our own troops in the neighborhood of Rheims thereupon were immediately transferred to Flanders. There they were to launch, as soon as seemed feasible, the long-prepared attack.

Marshal Foch's big offensive on July 18, in the direction of Soissons, interfered with these operations. On account of the pressure exerted by Marshal Foch, General von Boehn's Seventh Army had to be retired beyond the Vesle to the line Soissons-Rheims. This line was reached on the night of August 1. The whole Marne salient which had been taken in May was given up. This was the first great setback for Germany.

The successful execution of this most difficult retreat demonstrated the valor and ability of our troops. But the losses were great. Many divisions were used up. Fresh forces were required to rehabilitate the situation. With heavy heart, therefore, I had to give up the Flanders offensive. We lacked the necessary effectives and also the war material to carry it out.

There now developed the very situation which I had endeavored to prevent. The initiative passed to the enemy. Germany's position was extremely serious. It was no longer possible for us to win the war in a military sense. Politics must bring the war to a conclusion.

I have often been reproached for having assumed the actual superior management of politics as well as of the war. These reproaches are in no way borne out by facts!

If I mixed in politics, I simply did it out of a feeling of responsibility for so many thousand German lives. Ambition played no part in my activities. I merely felt it my duty to stop the weak, unfruitful policy of Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg, which, in my mind, was responsible for the development and outcome of the whole war. Field Marshal von Hindenburg felt as I did. No thought of self entered our minds. The national honor, the safety of the armies committed to our charge were not only uppermost; they were our only thought.

While the troops at the front fought with unequaled bravery against a world of enemies, at home the very soul of the German people was being shaken by anti-militaristic propaganda and by pacifistic and defeatist movements. Revolutionary agitation walked hand in hand with utter corruption. In every respect, the political leadership of the empire was vacillating when it should have been adamantine.

The supreme command was, therefore, frequently compelled to raise its voice in protest against the political mismanagement. Occasionally, it was even

forced to interfere with political affairs so as to avoid utterly disastrous results.

The supreme command would have disregarded its ty if it had not insisted with all its authority that political and military leaders must work together victory was to be achieved.

Unfortunately, all my exertions were in vain. n Bethmann-Hollweg resigned in July, 1917, but hing in the conduct of affairs within Germany in relation to Germany's allies was materially nged under the chancellorships of Michaelis and unt von Hertling.

The lack of unity of purpose in both thought and d which prevailed between statesmen and military ders in Germany all through the war is one of the ncipal reasons for the ultimate debacle.

Today, of course, I clearly see that conditions as y prevailed at home were merely the result of a icy already inaugurated before the outbreak of the by interests beyond the control of any gov- ment—interests whose influence veritably over- dowed the power of the nation.

The political leadership of the empire, consciously or unconsciously, succumbed to the influence of these interests. Germany simply was not permitted to gain victory. If I had only known then what I know

now, in spite of a natural disinclination for politics, I should have interfered more energetically and earlier to save the fatherland.

At a conference in Spa on August 13 and 14, the supreme command made it unequivocally clear to the political leadership of the Empire, that it was no longer possible to win the war militarily. All that was possible for military leadership was a strategical defense to hold the enemy and permit negotiations.

I realized that the only way of inducing the Allies to accept a renunciatory peace, not entailing unbearable conditions for the fatherland, was by paralyzing their fighting spirit as much as possible. Our troops had to offer the most stubborn resistance, showing unbroken fighting spirit. To the glory of the German troops up to the very end of the war they proved themselves worthy and capable. Thousands and thousands showed splendid heroism and many thousands died gloriously on that field of honor.

With more than a million fresh, young, ardent Americans pressing forward into the battle, the result was inevitable.

To its infinite credit the German field army remained securely in the hand of its leaders until the very end. Our retreat was conducted according to plan and in complete order.

The tremendous superabundance of pent-up, untapped nervous energy which America's troops brought into the fray more than balanced the weakness of their allies, who were utterly exhausted.

It was assuredly the Americans who bore the heaviest brunt of the fighting on the whole battle front during the last few months of the war. The German field army found them much more aggressive in attack than either the English or the French.

For instance, in the simultaneous attack launched at the end of September—six weeks before the war ended—by the French in Champagne and the Americans between the Argonne and the Meuse, General von Einem's Third German Army facing the French had no difficulty in holding firm the line against their frontal attacks for fully two weeks, while General von Gallwitz's Fifth German Army facing the Americans in the Argonne could not withstand the incessant force of intrepidity of the American attack.

In the October battles for the possession of the Meuse line, which we had held for four years and heavily fortified, the Americans must be credited with decisive victory. By frontal pressure against the troops opposing them, they forced us to abandon the Aisne position and retreat behind the Meuse. The French on numerous previous occasions had attacked

us there in great force, suffered terrible loss themselves and gained no advantage.

Regarding the actual fighting of the Americans, their attacks were undoubtedly brave and often reckless. They lacked sufficient dexterity or experience in availing themselves of topographical cover or protection. They came right on in open field and attacked in units much too closely formed. Their lack of actual field experience accounts for some extraordinarily heavy losses.

After the collapse of all of Germany's allies and after the Americans had wiped out the Saint-Mihiel salient Field Marshal von Hindenburg and I decided to ask our government to ask President Wilson for a truce and peace. This was undoubtedly the hardest and most bitter resolution of our lives. After careful survey of the entire situation, without "nerves," but calmly and with a full understanding of our responsibility, we united in urging an immediate cable message asking an armistice.

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Admiral von Hintze, who had just arrived at Spa, came independently to the same conclusion.

The army and the political leaders of the country were for the first time then in full accord.

THE END

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